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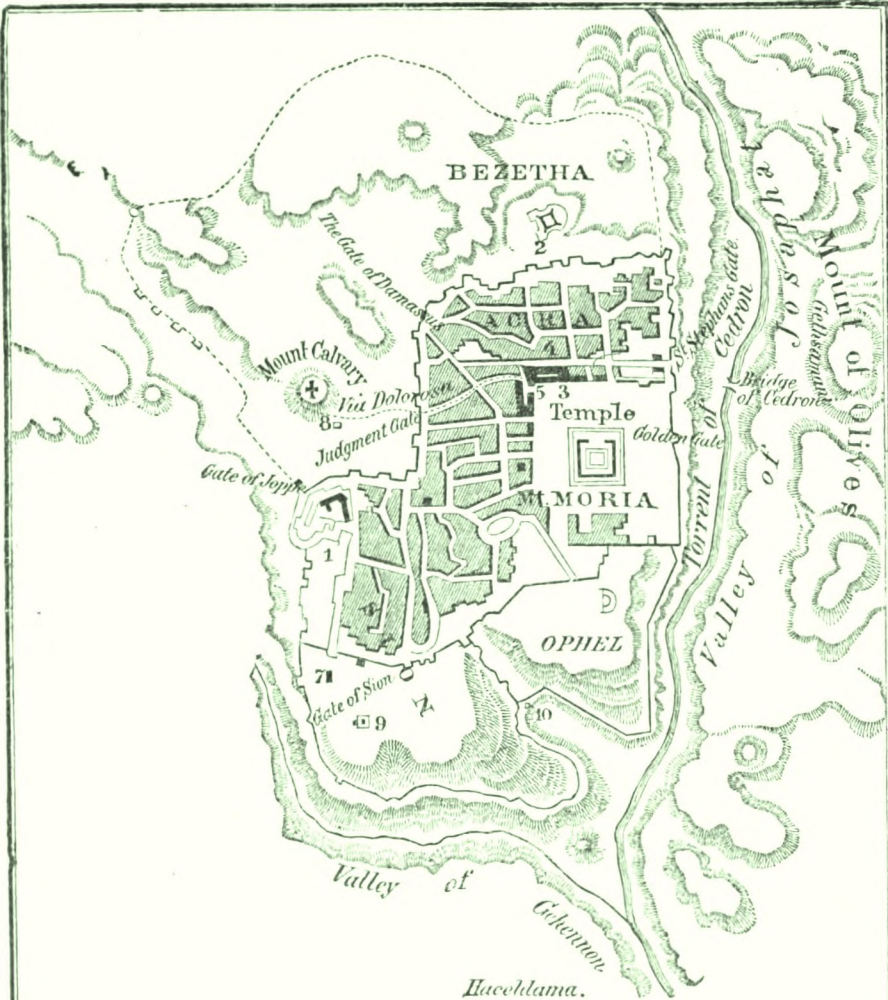
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New Practical Meditations for Every Day in the Year: From Jan. to July

Bruno Vercruysse

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FROM

Rev. Gabriel Ryan

**NEW
PRACTICAL MEDITATIONS
FOR
EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR**



WITH THE APPROBATION OF
HIS EMINENCE,
THE CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP OF NEW YORK

APPROBATION

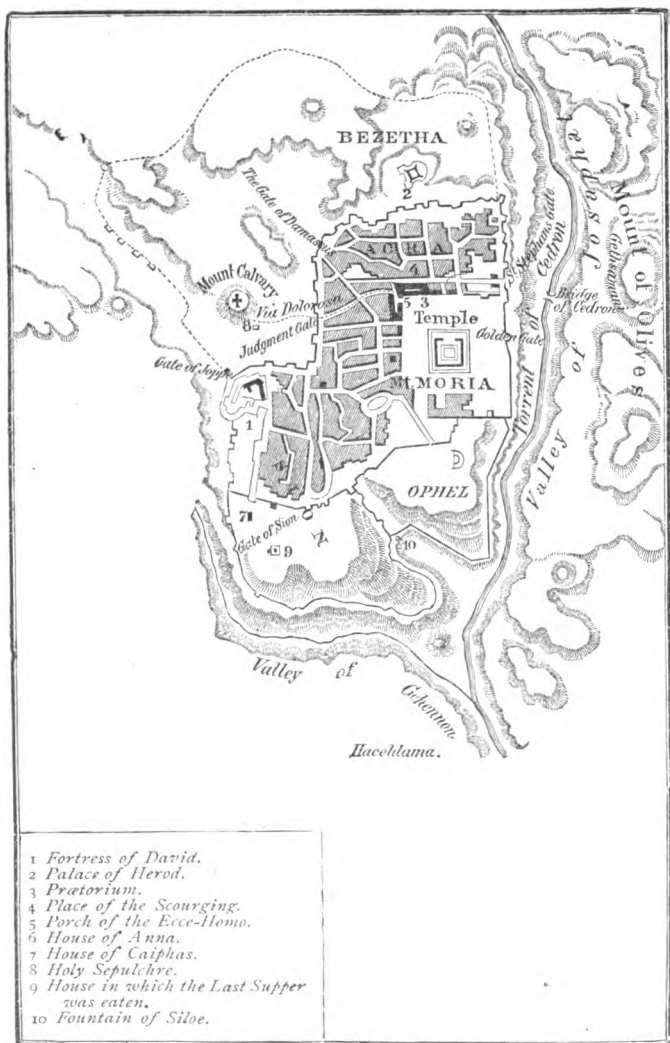
BY HIS EMINENCE.

VICTOR AUGUSTE, CARDINAL DESCHAMPS,

ARCHBISHOP OF MECHLIN, PRIMATE OF BELGIUM.

THESE Meditations, by the Rev. Father Bruno Vercruysse, of the Society of Jesus, are remarkable for the solidity of doctrine, the happy choice of subjects, and unctuous piety. The use of them can not fail to be very profitable to religious communities, to ecclesiastics, and to those pious persons in the world who aspire to perfection. Wherefore, we very willingly approve of the publication of this book, and are happy to be able thus to testify our esteem for the pious author.

† VTR. AUGUSTE,
ARCHBISHOP OF MECHLIN.



PLAN OF JERUSALEM
FOR THE MEDITATIONS ON THE PASSION OF OUR LORD

NEW
PRACTICAL MEDITATIONS

FOR EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR, ON THE
LIFE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

*Chiefly Intended for the Use
of Religious Communities*

BY THE
REV. FATHER BRUNO VERCRUYSSÉ, S.J.
THE ONLY COMPLETE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*Published with the Approbation and
Under the Direction of the Author*

Enriched by several Novenas and Octaves; Meditations for the First Friday of every Month and for the Days of Communion; Exercises preparatory to the Renewal of Vows, and for a Retreat of Eight Days; a New Method of hearing Mass, and Practical Remarks on the different Parts of Meditations; a Plan of Jerusalem with a Map of Palestine.

IN TWO VOLUMES
VOL. I.—FROM JANUARY TO JULY



NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO

BENZIGER BROTHERS

PRINTERS TO THE HOLY APOSTOLIC SEE

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Rev. Gabriel Ryan

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APPROBATION

OF THE

SUPERIOR-GENERAL OF THE MISSION OF NEW YORK AND CANADA.

I very willingly recommend the translation of Father Vercruysse's excellent *MEDITATIONS*, published by Messrs. Benziger Brothers. I am confident that the use of them will prove highly beneficial to all who aspire to Christian perfection.

T. CHARAUX, S.J.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF THE VERY REVEREND SUPERIOR-GENERAL OF THE
SOCIETY OF JESUS, TO THE AUTHOR. TRANSLATED FROM THE
ORIGINAL LATIN.

ROME, 15 October, 1859.

REVEREND FATHER IN CHRIST:

P. C. I have received your valued letter of the 13th August, inclosing specimens of *MEDITATIONS*. I see, with pleasure, that you desire to devote the strength and leisure which yet remain to you to a work which is likely to prove of no common utility. I therefore recommend you to continue in all confidence what you have so ably commenced. I may add that the method pursued throughout in the sequence of the points of meditation appears to me satisfactory; and I have no doubt of its meeting the approbation of many readers. May God grant you strength and grace to bring to a favorable end the work which you have undertaken for His greater glory!

Recommending myself, etc.,

PETER BECKX, S.J.

ROME, 2 May, 1863.

REVEREND FATHER IN CHRIST:

P. C. From the perusal of various extracts from your *MEDITATIONS*, I am led to hope that they will one day effect great spiritual good. Persevere, therefore, Reverend Father, and, with the light and assistance of divine grace, perfect the work which you have undertaken.

Recommending myself, etc., I remain your servant in Christ,

PETER BECKX, S.J.

ROME, 17 November, 1870.

REVEREND FATHER IN CHRIST:

P. C. I congratulate you on the success of your book of *MEDITATIONS*, a third edition of which you are called on to prepare. The important improvements which you tell me you have made in the work, and the trouble you have bestowed on them, authorize the hope that proportionate benefits will result therefrom. I beg of God to enlighten and support you, and to preserve you in health, that you may labor with a generous heart to bring a work of such importance to the greatest possible perfection.

Recommending myself to your prayers, I remain, etc.,

Your servant in Christ,

PETER BECKX, S.J.

LATEST APPROBATIONS AND TESTIMONIALS.

BURLINGTON, June 18, 1875.
I take great pleasure in recommending the PRACTICAL MEDITATIONS OF VERCROYSSÉ, chiefly intended for Religious. They are really PRACTICAL meditations which ought to be in the hands of all persons consecrated to God by the vows of religion.

† LOUIS,
Bishop of Burlington, Vt.

VANCOUVER, W. T., July 6, 1875.
I have examined VERCROYSSÉ'S PRACTICAL MEDITATIONS, and have no hesitation in declaring it the best book of its kind in the English language with which I am acquainted, and destined to become with the Clergy and Religious here as general a favorite in its new dress as it is in Europe in the original.

† A. M. A. BLANCHET,
Bishop of Nesqually.

SHERBROOKE, 6th July, 1875.
Although the work of Father Vercroyssé is designed for Religious communities, I would recommend its attentive perusal to all those who aspire to Christian perfection. Allow me, therefore, to join my approval and recommendation to those of His Eminence the Cardinal of New York, and to those of the most Rev. Fathers Beckx and Charaux, S.J.

† ANTOINE,
Evêque de Sherbrooke.

St. HYACINTHE, October 16, 1875.
I very willingly give my approbation to FATHER VERCROYSSÉ'S MEDITATIONS, and earnestly hope that they will meet with a favorable reception amongst all Catholics, and more specially amongst the English-speaking faithful of this diocese.

† L. Z. MOREAU,
Bishop of St. Hyacinthe.

PITTSBURG, December 1, 1876.
We have examined VERCROYSSÉ'S MEDITATIONS, and think they are admirably adapted to the purpose proposed by the pious author. We take pleasure in recommending them to other communities of our order.

SISTERS OF MERCY.

CONVENT OF THE IMMACULATE HEART, WEST CHESTER, PA., Dec. 18, 1876.

All our houses have in use the London translation of Father Vercroyssé's Meditations. I will, however, recommend to our local Superiors your edition of the same. They will all be pleased with the improvement in so valuable a work.

M. GONZAGA, C. J. M.

MADISON, N. J., January 1, 1877.
We are greatly pleased with the improvements of the present edition of an old friend, which we have used in most of our houses almost since its first appearance. I think it preferable to any other book of general meditations that has come under my notice for a long time.

M. M. XAVIER.

NAZARETH, NEAR BARDSTOWN, KY.
We are using this work in our Convents, and we consider the Meditations admirably suited to Religious communities.

MOTHER COLUMBA.

CINCINNATI, January 10, 1877.
We have been using VERCROYSSÉ'S MEDITATIONS for some time in our communities, and find them not only full of devotion, but especially most practical. We, therefore, earnestly recommend them to all the members of our Institute. Hoping that this valuable work may be widely circulated among the numerous religious orders of this country, we are

Yours respectfully,

THE SISTERS OF NOTRE DAME.

St. CATHARINE'S CONVENT, NEW YORK, March 29, 1877.
We consider the NEW PRACTICAL MEDITATIONS by Father Vercroyssé, S.J., as excellent and useful to all devout Catholics. Some of the Meditations render the book peculiarly suitable to Religious communities, and those for the First Friday and for days of Communion form a valuable addition.

SISTERS OF MERCY.

PREFACE

THE attention of the reader is particularly requested to the following remarks, which are essential to the full understanding of the plan of the Meditations.

In these new practical Meditations which I offer to Religious Communities, I have taken the liberty of making a few innovations, the utility of which seems to me incontrovertible.

First. As to their sequence. I have not followed the order of the successive Sundays, or weeks, nor have I, on the other hand, taken the calendar as a guide; both of these plans appearing to me to be attended with much inconvenience.

I have, in preference, and after mature consideration, adopted an arrangement which, while free from the complications of either system, combines the advantages of both.

Thus, I divide the work into two volumes, each containing Meditations for six months. The first includes those from January to June; the second, those from July to December. The first volume follows the order of the calendar as far as the 4th of February, which is the earliest day on which Ash-Wednesday, the first day of Lent, can possibly fall; from that date the order of the Meditations corresponds with the course of the Sundays or weeks, as far as the Feast of the Sacred Heart.

But as Ash-Wednesday and the Feast of the Sacred Heart — which depends on it — may fall thirty-three days later, I have inserted, at the end of the first volume, an additional set of thirty-three Meditations, some of which may be used before Ash-Wednesday, while the remaining portion will come in after the

Feast of the Sacred Heart, thus completing, in every case, the number of days included in the first half-year. For instance, in 1874, Ash-Wednesday falling on the 18th of February, and the Feast of the Sacred Heart on the 12th of June, fourteen of the supplementary Meditations will be used before Lent, while the remaining nineteen will answer for the days immediately succeeding the Feast of the Sacred Heart. (See note, page 107, Vol. I.)

The second volume follows uninterruptedly the order of the calendar.

With regard to the arrangement of subjects, I do not consider myself bound to adhere as closely to the line I have selected as is customary with most authors of meditations on the Life of our Divine Lord. Believing that a certain degree of variety tends to awaken interest and to fix the attention, I have occasionally interrupted the course of the gospel narrative by meditations on the moral virtues, and the obligations of the religious profession; on the lives of the principal founders of religious orders; and on the leading festivals of the year. Some of the latter are preceded by Novenas, or followed by Octaves, none of which have hitherto been published. The holy season of Lent has been exclusively consecrated to the sorrowful Passion of our Lord. I believe, however, that in giving for each Monday a meditation on the necessity and practice of penance, I have acted in conformity with the spirit of the Church.

At the end of each volume will be found a meditation for the first Friday of every month — these days being specially consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus — six for the monthly spiritual retreat, and some others for the days of communion. The regular form in which I have given the points of the Meditations appears to me the most natural and the best calculated to assist the memory, while it is, at the same time, the easiest for those appointed to read them aloud.

The Affections and Resolutions are merely stated as briefly as possible. Many others will naturally suggest themselves to the minds of those who meditate; and these last are to be preferred, as they proceed from one's self, or from divine inspiration.

Should the subject-matter comprised in the three Points prove too long, as will happen when the time of meditation is limited to half an hour, it will be sufficient to dwell on the first two Points, or even on one with the addition of the Colloquy.

My readers will, I hope, approve of my plan of keeping invariably to the literal text of the Holy Scriptures, according to the best commentators; of avoiding all strained and improbable interpretations, and of exhibiting, as far as may be done in these short Meditations, the connecting links in the history of the Life and Acts of our Divine Lord.

Scattered through the work are a few short explanatory notes tending to elucidate difficulties, and to secure the practical fruit of the Meditations. It only remains for me to beg that God, through His infinite goodness, may confer His most abundant blessings on all who use these Meditations, and to ask a remembrance of the author in their pious prayers.

In communities of nuns, the sister whose office it is to read the points of meditation to the community, will do well to glance over the pages beforehand, in order that she may be prepared to substitute the feminine pronoun for the masculine without hesitation whenever it occurs. She will also use the word *sisters* instead of *brethren*, throughout the Meditation.

METHOD OF HEARING MASS; OR, PIOUS PRACTICES

By means of which you may derive great benefit from assisting at the Holy Sacrifice.

BEFORE MASS

On your way to the church, consider that you are going to Calvary, there to witness the most sublime and affecting spectacle that can be imagined, that of a God made man, who immolates himself on a cross, suspended between heaven and earth, in order to reconcile earth with heaven, and man with God. Consider with lively faith that the sacrifice of the Mass is the renewal of that of the cross, or rather, that it is, according to the Council of Trent, the same sacrifice, with this sole difference, that, on the altar, it is accomplished without the shedding of blood, and that consequently it produces the same effects, since the Victim and He who sacrifices are the same, Jesus Christ, who, by the ministry of His priests, offers Himself to God His Father.

These considerations should inspire you, while on your way to the church, with sentiments of reverence, confidence, and devotion.

Having entered the church, and chosen a place where you may be free from distractions, resolve to avoid those faults which you are liable to commit when assisting at Mass, and beg of God the grace to be faithful to your resolutions. You will then express your desire to attain the ends for which the Holy Sacrifice is offered, namely, to render to God the honor due to Him in acknowledgment of His supreme dominion over all creatures; to obtain from His infinite goodness mercy and forgiveness of your sins; to thank Him

for the innumerable benefits received from Him, and to implore a continuance of His favors.

DURING MASS

There are many ways by which you may secure to yourself the fruits of the Holy Sacrifice. Much latitude is left, on this point, to the devotion of the faithful. Some use the prayers for Mass to be found in any of the Prayer-Books, while others prefer to recite the Rosary or the Litanies, with pious exercises suited for every day in the week, or else the Office of the Dead, the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, or that of the Sacred Heart. Choose those prayers which seem best to you, taking care, however, that these vocal exercises do not so occupy you as to exclude the consideration of the three principal parts of the Mass: the *Offertory*, *Consecration*, and *Communion*. Adopt for these precious moments some fixed practices of devotion, which may assist you to participate largely in the graces attached to them. A few may be here suggested.

1st. At the OFFERTORY. Whilst the priest elevates the Host on the paten, pronouncing the words, *Suscipe, sancte Pater, hanc immaculatam Hostiam*, "Accept, Holy Father, this unspotted Host," unite your offering to his; place yourself in spirit on the altar of sacrifice, and say from your heart, Deign, Heavenly Father, to receive the offering which I humbly make to Thee of my body and soul, with all their senses and faculties. They are the gifts of Thy bounty. To Thee do I surrender them, and I declare before the holy angels who now surround this altar, that I desire to use them only in conformity with Thy holy will made manifest in Thy commandments. My most fervent wish is to belong wholly to Thee, and to devote myself in all things to the advancement of the glory of Thy Holy Name, to the salvation of others, and to my own sanctification. Sustain me by Thy grace, I

entreat Thee, O Father of Mercy! that I may persevere to my last breath in these dispositions. Having thus prayed and offered yourself to God, make a brief examination, considering how far your conduct has hitherto corresponded with the profession you have just made, in order that you may henceforth prove more faithful.

2d. The CONSECRATION or ELEVATION. At this solemn moment, when the priest elevates before the congregation the Divine Victim concealed under the appearance of the consecrated Host, contemplate with lively faith your beloved Saviour, as He was beheld by those who had nailed Him to the cross, covered with blood and wounded for your sins, and in the midst of His agonizing pain, forgetting Himself to plead your cause with His Father, and to implore pardon for you in that cry which He uttered from His heart, *Pater, dimitte illis*. "Father, forgive them."

This contemplation should inspire you with lively sentiments of admiration, love, and gratitude, with horror of sin, contrition, and boundless devotion.

Having expressed these sentiments, unite with Jesus in the prayer which He offered to His heavenly Father on behalf of all mankind, contemplate in succession the five wounds, which are, as Saint Bonaventure says, "so many places of refuge, so many voices raised in supplication, to intercede for us," and at each one ask some particular grace or favor.

At the wound of the right hand: Pray for the Sovereign Pontiff, and for those bishops, priests, and missionaries who labor under his direction for the salvation of souls, that their zealous exertions may be crowned with the fullest success. At the wound of the left hand: Pray for the conversion of heathens, Jews, heretics, and schismatics, and for the return to God of all bad Christians who are in league with hell against Jesus Christ and His holy Church. At the wound of the right foot: Pray for the members of

your family, beginning with those most closely connected by affinity; for your benefactors and friends; and likewise, as Christ ordains, for your enemies. At the wound of the left foot: Pray for the souls in Purgatory, particularly those who have most claims on your charity. At the wound of the heart of Jesus: Pray for yourself: place in that heart, burning with love, all your cares, troubles, fears, hopes, and desires.

By adopting the habit of thus offering your petitions in a certain order, corresponding with the five wounds of our Divine Lord, you will always be able, in a few moments, and without effort, to offer an universal prayer, pleasing to God, and most beneficial to your neighbor and yourself.

3d. The COMMUNION. On those days when you have not the happiness of approaching the holy table, you should not neglect to make a *spiritual communion*, which, according to Saint Teresa, "is sometimes as advantageous as actual communion." This consists in forming in your heart with great devotion, three acts namely, an act of contrition, as nearly perfect as possible; an act of charity or love of God; and an act of ardent desire to approach the Holy Communion and derive from it the abundant graces which it confers on those who prepare to receive it worthily.

AFTER MASS

Examine briefly:

If you have followed exactly the preceding counsels.

How you have employed the intervals of time which separate the principal parts of the Holy Sacrifice.

If you have been careful as to your exterior deportment, and vigilant in avoiding distractions.

If all has been well done, return thanks to God; if otherwise, ask pardon for your negligence. Before leaving the holy place, beg of Jesus to bless all your occupations during the coming day, as well as the good resolutions that you have made during morning prayer or meditation.

REMARKS ON THE CONSIDERATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

IN order that this may be a book of Meditation, and not merely of spiritual reading, you should pause and reflect after each sentence of the Considerations and Applications, as if it were a separate paragraph. Your own reflections will enlighten and affect you more closely than any that can be suggested to you.

REMARKS ON THE AFFECTIONS

You should not be afraid of enlarging and dwelling upon the pious Affections which are merely indicated herein. By this means the fire of divine love is enkindled and kept up, the Meditation rendered profitable, and the spirit of fervor maintained during the day. Many other Affections and Resolutions will suggest themselves, and these latter will be so much the better, as they will have come either from one's own devotion or from the inspiration of God.

REMARKS ON THE RESOLUTIONS

We should not rest satisfied with making the Resolutions as given. We should endeavor to insure our fidelity to them by considering the motives likely to make the deepest impression on us; such as, 1st, The great advantages to be derived from their accomplishment in the present and in the future; 2d, The claims of justice and honor—the end of our creation and of our vocation—the solemn engagements of baptism and religious profession—our expressed resolution to aim at perfection; 3d, The facility of the practice of virtue—only a few trifling efforts are required of us, some slight sacrifices, alleviated by the unction of divine grace; 4th, The happiness to be found in the practice of virtue. What satisfaction do we not experience after we have made an effort or a sacrifice for God's sake! What consolation awaits us at the hour of death! and, lastly, The necessity of saving our souls. *One thing is necessary*, says our Lord, that is, that I should sanctify myself and save my soul, and the Resolutions that I have made must assist me materially in attaining this end.

REMARKS ON THE COLLOQUIES

These Colloquies may be multiplied and addressed, according to each person's devotion, or the inspiration of the moment, to others besides those suggested. In the final Colloquy it will be desirable to offer to God the practical resolutions for the coming day, and to beg earnestly the grace to be faithful to them. A great and very general fault is that of not making *practical resolutions for the day* or of not *asking grace to keep them faithfully*, as if, through our own strength alone, we could hope to do so. The Meditation should conclude with the recital of the *Pater Noster* or the *Ave Maria*.

PRAYER BEFORE MEDITATION

My Lord and my God, I believe that Thou art here present, and that Thou dost now behold me. I adore Thee. I acknowledge myself unworthy to appear before Thee. Nevertheless, full of confidence in Thy infinite goodness, I dare to ask the grace to pass this hour (or half-hour) of meditation in such a manner as may tend to Thy glory and my own spiritual advancement. Enlighten my understanding, touch my heart, and strengthen my will, that I may increase in knowledge and love of Thee, and serve Thee henceforth with greater fidelity. I ask this grace through the intercession of the most Blessed Virgin, of my holy patron, and my guardian angel.

We should join our own efforts with prayer, and to this end adopt the means and employ the practices recommended by masters of the spiritual life.

MEANS.— Seriously prepare the Points of meditation, as if you were to propose them the following day to others. Think of them after you have retired for the night before sleep comes on. Recall them to mind on awaking in the morning. During the visit to the Blessed Sacrament and at morning prayers, beg the grace to meditate well. Before reciting the preparatory prayer, ask yourself, "Before whom am I about to appear? and for what purpose?" Finish the meditation with a *Pater Noster*, and a short examination on the causes which may have led to its failure or success.

PIOUS PRACTICES.— When, through serious indisposition of mind or body, you find yourself incapable of applying to a regular meditation or contemplation, you may rest satisfied with reviewing beforehand the different duties in which you are to be employed during the day, considering how you can best fulfill them in a manner pleasing to God and edifying to others, resolving to perform them thus, and asking God's blessing on each one of them. You may also complain to God, as you would to your director, of your inability to meditate, of your miseries, which you may enumerate, of your many failures in the practice of virtue, mentioning them in detail. If thus humbling yourself and realizing your own nothingness, you terminate your prayer with an intimate conviction that you are unworthy of even the lowest place or the meanest employment in the house, and if you are perfectly satisfied to endure reproof and mortification, you will have made a very good meditation. "Ex fructu arbor agnoscetur." "By the fruit the tree is known," says our Lord. (St. Matt. 12: 33.)

MEDITATIONS

ON THE

LIFE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

JANUARY I

ON THE THREE EVENTS OF THE DAY:

THE CIRCUMCISION, THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS, THE
NEW YEAR

1st Prel. Behold the Child Jesus offering for us to His Heavenly Father the first drops of His blood.

2d Prel. Ask the grace of beginning this year with a renewal of fervor and generosity.

POINT I

THE CIRCUMCISION

CONSIDERATION.—The first day of the year, which corresponds with the octave day of the Feast of the Nativity, is in this, as in most Catholic countries, a festival of obligation. The Church instituted it in memory of the circumcision, to which our Lord submitted * on this day through love for us. It is then to-day that He begins to fulfil His office of Mediator, in taking on Himself the mark, the suffering, and the debt of sin; in offering Himself as a victim of expiation, and shedding His blood for the first time. To this oblation of infinite price He joins the offering of His whole self, and of every instant of His mortal life. What love on the part of God for men!

APPLICATION.—Let us give Him back love for love. We enter to-day on a new year; let us consecrate the beginning of it to that God who has so loved us, and let this consecration be so entire that every day and

* The masters of the spiritual life recommend that, in meditating, we should consider the mystery presented for consideration as if it were actually taking place before our eyes.

every minute shall be employed in His service and to His greater glory. Let us offer to Him also our soul and body, together with the blood that flows in our veins, and be ready to shed the last drop of it in proof of our fidelity and our love.

AFFECTIONS.—Renew in detail the above offering and consecration.

RESOLUTIONS.—From this first day of the year, I will earnestly endeavor that my conduct may correspond with this offering and consecration of myself.

POINT II

THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS

CONSIDERATION.—The angel had said to Joseph, “She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.” (St. Matt. 1:21.) It was the custom among the Israelites to give a name to their male children with the circumcision, the eighth day after their birth. This name was generally taken from some circumstance relating to the birth of the child, or from a quality which it was hoped the child would be endowed with. Our Heavenly Father alone knew the unspeakable qualities which were to characterize the Word made Flesh, and He only could give Him a name suited to His divine mission. He gave Him the name of JESUS, which signifies SAVIOUR. That name, so beautiful, so glorious, the Divine Child does not wish to bear for one moment without fulfilling its meaning; even at the moment of His circumcision, He showed Himself a Saviour by shedding for us that blood a single drop of which is more than sufficient for the ransom and salvation of the whole world.

APPLICATION.—In the ancient law, the newly-born became by circumcision the children of Abraham, and inheritors of the promise which he received. Far happier than they, we became by Holy Baptism, of

which Circumcision was but a type, the adopted children of God and inheritors of His kingdom; we become Christians, disciples, and brethren of Christ, and co-heirs with Him.

There is a glorious meaning in these titles: but let us remember that if, instead of following in the footsteps of Jesus, we fail to accomplish their solemn meaning; if we bear them in vain; if we dishonor them by our conduct, they will become a judgment and a severe punishment for us.

AFFECTIONS.—Gratitude combined with salutary fear.

RESOLUTIONS.—Let us so act that, during this year, all in us shall correspond to the dignity of the great name we bear.

POINT III

THE NEW YEAR

CONSIDERATION.—The blood that Jesus sheds for us in the Circumcision is the blood of the *New Covenant*, “*sanguis meus novi Testamenti*,” (St. Matt. 26: 28;) a covenant which ought to renew the face of the earth by causing *reality* to succeed to *figures*, the *liberty* of the divine adoption to *slavery*, the *law of charity* to the *law of fear*, which characterized the *old Covenant*.

APPLICATION.—Let us profit by the circumstance of the new year, and of the wonderful renewal wrought in the world by the great mystery of this day, to renew in our hearts an increase of fervor and of generosity in the service of God. May this year be a year of fervor and progress! It will pass rapidly, like that which has just ended. If God gives us the grace to see its end, how glad and happy we shall be to have passed it holily!

COLLOQUY with the Blessed Virgin, who witnessed the ineffable mysteries accomplished in the circumcision of her Divine Son.

ON THE NAME OF JESUS

1st Prel. I will represent to myself the angel saying to Joseph, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins." (St. Matt. 1:21.)

2d Prel. I will beg for the grace really to understand the *greatness*, the *merit*, and the *power* of the name of *Jesus*.

POINT I

GREATNESS OF THE NAME OF JESUS

CONSIDERATION.—The name of Jesus is great in its *origin*; it is God Himself who has given it by the ministry of an archangel. It is great in its *signification*. Men have sometimes in token of gratitude given to other men the name of saviour of their country. Never have they dreamt of giving to any one the name of Saviour of the World, a name whose meaning, in the full extent of the word, has been so wonderfully realized by the Son of God made man.

APPLICATION.—With what respect and with what religious attention ought we not to pronounce this great and holy Name, "which is," says the Apostle, "above all names." (Philip. 2:9.) Accordingly, from the earliest ages of Christianity, the custom was introduced and became general of bowing or uncovering the head when pronouncing or hearing others pronounce it. Do you not often fail to pay to it due veneration, by pronouncing it perhaps without attention or devotion even in your prayers?

AFFECTIONS.—Gladness of heart, and gratitude at the thought of the inestimable favor recalled to mind by these words of the Apostle: "God is faithful, by whom you are called unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." (1. Cor. 1:9.)

RESOLUTIONS.—Let us during the coming year redouble our efforts to honor and cause to be honored as much as we can, the Holy Name of Jesus.

POINT II

THE MERIT OF THE NAME JESUS

CONSIDERATION.—The noble name borne by a son solely by right of heritage is no great merit to him, because its greatness is due to the glory of another. Not so with the name borne by the Son of God. He acquired it by His own merits, by redeeming, at the sacrifice of His life, the human race from the pains of death, which it had incurred, and in re-instating it in its rights to a heavenly inheritance. Was there ever a name or a title better deserved?

APPLICATION.—The names of *adopted son* of God, of *brother* or *sister of Jesus*, which you bear, are also titles of great value; but they are not due to your merits. You owe them to the grace of Baptism, to the special grace of your holy vocation. Nevertheless, it is your duty to prove yourself worthy of them; it is your duty to co-operate with grace, so as worthily to bear the names in which you justly glory. Up to this moment, this grace has not failed you; but have you corresponded with it? Has your co-operation been generous and persevering? Has it been in proportion to the glorious names you bear?

AFFECTIONS.—I will awaken in my heart an ardent desire to see the wish of the Apostle fulfilled in me, "That the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you according to the grace of God." (2 Thess. 1:12.)

RESOLUTIONS.—During the coming year, I wish to neglect nothing that may assist me to attain that end.

POINT III

POWER OF THE NAME OF JESUS

"At the name of Jesus," says St. Paul, "every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth." (Philip. 2:10.) All things

must submit at the invocation of the name of Jesus. By the invocation of this name, the Apostles worked the most astonishing miracles, and the faithful drove out demons from the bodies of the pagans. By the invocation of the name of *Jesus*, the martyrs of all ages have triumphed over their torments, the confessors and the virgins have resisted the seductions of the world. In this sacred name the Church terminates all her prayers, and in it she desires we should find strength and consolation in our last agony.

APPLICATION.— With what confidence ought we not then to invoke it in our temptations, our troubles, our perplexities, and in all our undertakings; and this the more because Jesus has told us Himself, “If you ask the Father any thing in my name, He will give it you.” (St. John 16:23.) Let us, then, become familiar with some ejaculatory prayer in which we shall find the name of Jesus, so that it will come naturally to our lips in critical moments, and above all at the awful moment when we shall be struggling with death. Oh! may our last words then be, “Jesus, Jesus, be unto me a Jesus!”

COLLOQUY with the Divine Infant Jesus, in conformity with the pious sentiments experienced during the meditation.*

* The author of the *Spiritual Exercises* attaches so much importance to these Colloquies, that he wishes we should fix upon them with the Preparation of the Points. Therefore they will be found, generally speaking, merely indicated, but not developed. The AFFECTIONS and RESOLUTIONS of the two preceding Points will, if needed, supply ample subject for them. These COLLOQUIES may also be multiplied and addressed according to each person's devotion, or the inspiration of the moment, to others besides those suggested. In the final COLLOQUY it will be well to offer to God the practical resolutions for the coming day, and to beg earnestly the grace to be faithful to them. A great and very general fault is that of not making practical resolutions for the day, or of not asking grace to keep them faithfully, as if, through our own strength alone, we could hope to accomplish them. The meditation should conclude with the recital of the Pater Noster or the Ave Maria.

THE GIVING OF THE NAME OF JESUS

1st Prel. Represent to yourself the angel Gabriel saying to Mary, "Thou shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus." (St. Luke 1:31.)

2d Prel. Beg the grace to bear worthily the name conferred on you in Baptism.

POINT I

NAME OF JESUS, REWARD OF HUMILITY

CONSIDERATION.—"His name was called Jesus," (St. Luke 2:21,) Saviour. When was this glorious name given to Him? Was it on the day of His birth, when He was glorified by the angels, venerated by the shepherds? No; but at the moment of His circumcision, when He humbled Himself so as to be made like unto sinners, by receiving in His flesh the mark of sin. It was given to Him, then, in reward for His ineffable humiliations. This is even formally declared by the Apostle, "The Lord emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant; for which cause God hath given Him a name which is above all names." (Philip. 2:7, 9.)

APPLICATION.—If we wish to bear worthily the name of Jesus, which was impressed on our foreheads in Baptism, in Confirmation, and in the religious Profession, let us be humble in heart and soul; be patient and resigned in humiliations, no matter from whom they come. We can not hope to be the companions of Jesus in glory except so far as we shall have taken a part in His humiliations.

AFFECTIONS.—Excite in your heart an ardent desire to esteem yourself as nothing, in order that you may increase in favor with God, and to humble yourself willingly for the love of Jesus, that you may attain a greater resemblance to Him.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will accept all humiliations that it may please God to send me, submitting to them joyfully, or at least in a spirit of resignation.

POINT II

NAME OF JESUS, REWARD OF OBEDIENCE

CONSIDERATION.—"They called His name Jesus." When did they call Him by it? At the moment when, submitting of His own will to the law of circumcision, He made the sacrifice of His own will and liberty to His Father by binding Himself to observe all His life the harsh requirements of the Mosaic Law; "for every man circumcising himself," says St. Paul, "is a debtor to do the whole law." (Galatians 5:3.) See, then, what it cost the Incarnate Word to merit for Himself the name of Jesus. "Becoming obedient unto death," says the same Apostle; "for which cause God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all names." (Philip. 2:9.)

APPLICATION.—What a happy resemblance there is between us and Jesus! By the vow of obedience we also have made the sacrifice of our liberty, we have subjected our will until death to the yoke of religious observances. But these observances are infinitely more gentle and more easy to fulfil than those imposed by the Mosaic law. Let us be invariably faithful to them, whatever it may cost us. Without this fidelity, the name, which is our honor, shall not be for us a title to glory and eternal reward.

AFFECTIONS.—How often, O Lord! have I failed in this fidelity, even on slight pretexts, and on occasions of little difficulty. What can I do but humble myself, and ask of Thee a more generous heart?

RESOLUTIONS.—I will henceforth prove myself more faithful and more generous, especially with regard to such or such points of the rule.

POINT III

NAME OF JESUS, REWARD OF MORTIFICATION

CONSIDERATION.—"They called His name Jesus." When and at what moment? At the same moment

when in circumcision He suffered for us; He shed His blood for us and bound Himself to lead a life of privations, mortifications, and sacrifices, until He should have ended it by the sacrifice of Himself. It was then that His Heavenly Father gave Him the glorious name of Jesus, Saviour.

APPLICATION.— Jesus, says St. Peter, “suffered for us” from His entrance into the world, “leaving you an example that you should follow His steps,” (1. St. Peter 2: 21,) leading a life of abnegation and mortification. And let us not think that there is question only of a counsel; for the words of our Lord prove the contrary. “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross.” (St. Matt. 16: 24.) “He that taketh not up his cross and followeth me is not worthy of me.” (St. Matt. 10: 38.) Consequently, in order not to forfeit the good opinion of our Divine Master, and not to be judged unworthy of the great recompense which He promises to His true disciples, we ought to resemble Him by our love of the cross, by the exercise of continual mortification, which the Apostle calls the “*circumcision of the heart.*” Let us examine ourselves on this point; let us see whether we have not partly lost the spirit of mortification which animated us in our first fervor.

COLLOQUY with Jesus, who by His humiliations, His obedience, and His sufferings, shows to all who are willing to follow Him, the true road to glory and happiness.

ON THE VALUE OF TIME

1st Prel. Represent to yourself the Apostle Paul saying, "Whilst we have time, let us work good." (Galatians 6:10.)

2d Prel. Beg the grace really to appreciate the value of time, and to make a good use of it during the course of the new year.

POINT I

CONSIDERATION.—"Time is worth what heaven is worth," says St. Bernard; and nothing is more true, because not only will no one attain heaven without having passed through the trials of time, but he will only obtain it, according to the Divine promises, as the reward of a good use of time. This eternal reward can depend upon a single moment well employed. Witness the good thief: his life had been a bad one; he was certainly on the point of death; but in that awful moment, enlightened by grace, he humbly acknowledged his sins, he implored mercy from our Divine Redeemer; immediately heaven was promised to him, and Jesus said to him, "This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." (St. Luke 23:43.)

APPLICATION.—What estimate ought we not then to make of the time which is given to us! We ought to value it as much, nay more than if it were a diamond which would buy a kingdom. For what is an earthly kingdom compared with the kingdom of heaven? And the good employment of time can win for us the eternal possession of that kingdom. And further, each well-employed moment can win for us a new degree of glory and happiness in heaven; a new heaven, so to speak, in heaven itself.

AFFECTIONS.—Acts of faith in this encouraging truth, and of regrets for not having made a better use of time.

RESOLUTIONS.—I wish to regulate the employment of time so that I may use it to greater advantage. As much want of regularity leads to loss of time, so does

a judicious rule of life assist us to turn every moment to account.

POINT II

CONSIDERATION.—“Time is worth what the blood of Jesus Christ is worth,” adds St. Bernard, because our good actions done in time can not have merit before God save in consequence of and in virtue of the redemption; this redemption has been wrought only at the price of the blood of Jesus Christ; it is His blood which has made time fruitful; the blood of God has become like money, which represents the value of time.

APPLICATION.—“The precious blood of Jesus Christ,” is a consecrated sentence in all languages. What can be more precious? “A single drop of that blood would suffice,” says St. Thomas, “to redeem the world.” How avaricious ought we, then, to be of time, in order not to lose a moment of it! God Himself sets us the example: He bestows His gifts and graces on us in torrents, but time He gives us only drop by drop; no one ever received two instances of it at once. And how do people waste this precious time! They spend it in trifles, they study how to get rid of it, they use it to offend God, and to bring on themselves eternal misery.

AFFECTIONS.—Compassionate the blindness of those who abuse the most precious gift of God, a blindness in which you perhaps have participated.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will imitate those saints whose utmost efforts were directed to the profitable employment of time. St. Alphonsus Liguori and several others went so far as to bind themselves by vow never voluntarily to lose a moment.

POINT III

CONSIDERATION.—“Time is worth as much as God Himself;” and behold why and how, continues St. Bernard, because every instant well employed earns the

eternal possession of God. Therefore what a severe account will one day be demanded of us! One moment is sufficient to utter an idle word; and Jesus Christ assures us that this loss of time, insignificant as we think it, will not pass unnoticed. "I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the Day of Judgment." * (St. Matt. 12: 36.)

APPLICATION.—I believe all this: but is my conduct in accordance with my faith? Do I, in my examen of conscience, call myself to an account for the employment of my time? for its loss? and for the causes of this loss? Do I confess this with repentance, with a sincere purpose of amendment? Let us, then, go into a detailed examination, let us see *when*, *where*, and *how* we have lost time, so as to use it better during the course of the new year. The great means of spending it usefully and happily is to make a rule of life, and to be faithful to it. In truth, this rule is already laid down for us, at least in part; we all have duties to fulfil at certain hours of the day, and besides, our life is regulated by the sound of the bell; nevertheless there remain intervals of free time at our own disposal, and it is this free time that we should regulate; as otherwise we shall be liable to waste the precious moments on unnecessary or useless objects, and thus subject ourselves to endless doubt and perplexity. Is it not this which experience has taught us?

COLLOQUY with St. Alphonsus Liguori, who, faithful to his vow of never losing time, only ceased with his last breath to write and labor.

* In order that this book may be one of meditation, and not merely of spiritual reading, you should pause and reflect after each sentence of the CONSIDERATIONS and APPLICATIONS, as if it were a separate paragraph. Your own reflections will enlighten and affect you more directly than any that can be suggested to you. The form of printing each sentence in a separate paragraph would have been adopted in the work, had it not been considered that such an arrangement would add too much to the size of the volume.

ON EMPLOYING TIME WELL

1st Prel. Represent to yourself the Apostle saying these words, "Now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. 6:2.)

2d Prel. Beg, as the fruit of this Meditation, the grace to understand well and to put in practice the means for utilizing and sanctifying time.

POINT I

CONSIDERATION.—*To sanctify time, and never to waste it, we must live continually in a state of grace.* Faith teaches us that no action, however holy and good it may be in itself, will be meritorious of eternal life for him who performs it in a state of mortal sin. Consequently all the time passed consciously in the state of mortal sin is time lost for eternity. What loss and what misfortune! And is it not the misfortune of the greater number of Christians? How many are there to whom this year, or the greater part of this year, will be thus forever lost! How they will one day regret it!

APPLICATION.—If the religious state had no other advantage for you than that of preserving you from this misfortune, how happy you ought to consider yourself in being called to it, and what sacrifices ought you not to be ready to make, if necessary, to persevere in it until your last breath!

AFFECTIONS.—Increase in me, O Lord! the esteem and love of my holy vocation.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will endeavor to secure for others a share in the happiness which I enjoy, by at least reclaiming them as well as I can from the miserable state of sin.

POINT II

CONSIDERATION.—*To sanctify time, and never to waste it, we must be in a state of grace, and have a pure intention.* All our actions, whether good or indifferent, must be done from a supernatural motive — for God, in consideration of God. Men see only the ex-

terior, God judges the intention: what we do not do for Him He will not reward. The Scribes and the Pharisees did many good works, but through ostentation, and for love of a vain popularity; Jesus Christ tells us in the Gospel that they will not be rewarded — they will have lost their time and labor. (St. Matt. 6: 1.)

APPLICATION.— Have we not reason to fear the loss, in part at least, of the merit of many of our good works, because self-love, vanity, the desire of pleasing men, have been secretly mingled with the motives from which we acted? Let us look into the secret recesses of our hearts, and have the courage to question and to answer ourselves.

AFFECTIONS.— Assist me, O Lord! to combat and overcome that inordinate self-love which so often destroys, in Thy sight, the merit of my best actions.

RESOLUTIONS.*— Often during the day, renew your good intentions, particularly with regard to those actions which are in themselves indifferent, in order that

* We should not rest satisfied with merely making the above RESOLUTIONS. We should likewise endeavor to insure our fidelity to them by considering those motives which seem likely to make the deepest impressions on us: such as, *First*. The great advantages to be derived from their fulfilment: these are, increased purity of conscience, the lessening of the debt of expiation due for our past sins, a higher degree of merit, glory, and happiness in heaven, and a fuller benediction on all our good works. *Secondly*. The obligations of justice and honor — those of our religious profession. The solemn engagements to which we bind ourselves by our vows, our avowed determination to aim at perfection, the value and withal the fleeting nature of time. *Thirdly*. Facility of the practice of virtue. Only a few slight efforts are required from us, some trivial sacrifices, alleviated by the unctions of Divine grace. *Fourthly*. The happiness of well-doing. What satisfaction do we not experience after an effort or a sacrifice made for God's sake! What consolation awaits us at the hour of death! *Lastly*. The necessity of saving our souls. *One thing is necessary*, says Our Lord. That is, that I should sanctify myself and save my soul; and the resolutions that I have made must assist me materially to attain this end. You will find in the consideration of these motives, as well as in the AFFECTIONS and COLLOQUIES indicated, sufficient to occupy you during the meditation, were it even to last for more than an hour.

the considerable time which they occupy may thus be utilized and sanctified.

POINT III

CONSIDERATION.— *To sanctify time, and never to waste it, it is necessary that our actions be done fervently, in a manner worthy of God.* You perform many good actions with an habitually pure intention; but you do them languidly, in a lukewarm and imperfect way, and the greater part of the time that you have spent in them will be lost, and without merit. This is why the Holy Spirit urges us so strongly, or rather commands us, “In omnibus operibus tuis præcellens esto.” “In all thy works keep the pre-eminence.” (Eccles. 33: 23.)

APPLICATION.— Happy is the man, happy is the religious, who with vigilance and generosity keeps this divine precept. What a harvest of merits he will lay up in a short time! He will, as the Wise Man says, “in a short space have fulfilled a long time.” (Wisd. 4: 13.) It depends upon ourselves only to share this happiness. One means among many others is to form a habit of adding to the words which we use so often when making the sign of the cross the following aspiration, *I wish to perform this action well*; then to examine ourselves when we have done it.

COLLOQUY with the young St. Stanislaus Kostka, who, even before entering religion, attained in a short time a high degree of sanctity; not by performing wonderful acts of virtue, but by uniting even his most trifling actions with great purity of intention and ardent charity. In this manner he sanctified every moment of time, and contrived not to lose any portion of it. I will earnestly beg of him to obtain for me grace to walk in his footsteps.

FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY, OR OF THE KINGS

1st Prel. I will imagine that I see the three Kings or Wise Men walking by the light of the star.

2d Prel. I will ask the grace really to understand what *memories*, what *blessings*, and what *duties* this Feast should remind me of.

POINT I

THE WONDERFUL MEMORIES THAT THE EPIPHANY RECALLS TO US

In all ages, the Church has celebrated this Feast during eight days with an extraordinary splendor, to perpetuate the memory of a great and happy event: the manifestation of Jesus Christ to the Magi, and in their persons to all the people of the earth, buried, like them, in the darkness of paganism. The word Epiphany means *manifestation* or *appearing*. The historical details are given to us in the Gospel of this day's Mass; it begins with these words: "When Jesus, therefore, was born in Bethlehem of Juda, in the days of King Herod, behold there came Wise Men from the East to Jerusalem: saying, Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to adore Him." (St. Matt. 2: 1, 2.)

APPLICATION.—The memory of the great event solemnized on this day recalls other thoughts to our minds, and affords us profitable instruction. It reminds us first of the eagerness of Jesus to make Himself known to all by means at once gentle and efficacious — to the Jews who had faith, by an angel; to the Gentiles, by a miraculous star: and it teaches us to be zealous to make God known and loved by all the world without any distinction. It reminds us also of the wonderful sweetness of the ways of Divine Providence, who always proportions the means of salvation to the various dispositions of men, and it teaches us

to have an unshaken confidence in that Providence.

AFFECTIONS.— Adore and praise God, abandoning yourself altogether to His Divine Providence.

RESOLUTIONS.— To reflect frequently during the day on the purpose of the Festival, and on the great Mystery commemorated.

POINT II

THE GREAT BLESSINGS THAT THE EPIPHANY RECALLS TO THE MEMORY

The posterity of Abraham had been chosen to form a people who, in the midst of idolatrous nations, preserved the faith and worship of the true God. But a day was to come when all the nations of the earth were to be called to the same faith, and to form but one nation in Jesus Christ. The promise of this had been made to Abraham, and on this day it was fulfilled by the calling of the Magi, who represented all the idolatrous nations, and consequently our own ancestors. The Festival of the Epiphany should therefore bring vividly to our minds the gratitude we owe to God, for the gift of faith, for the great blessing of being born in a land where that holy faith has been maintained in all its purity, and perhaps of parents remarkable for their faith and piety.

APPLICATION.— May the memory of these wonderful blessings be ever in our minds, but especially on this day! We ought to show more thankfulness because they were on the part of God the fruit of a predilection altogether gratuitous. Let us have a dread of ingratitude; it causes the fountain of grace to run dry.

AFFECTIONS.— The Church in the office of this day invites us to sentiments of joy and gratitude appropriate to the Festival. Let us then endeavor during the day, and especially at meditation, to excite these feelings in our hearts.

RESOLUTIONS.— We will endeavor at Holy Com-

munion, and during the solemn office of the Festival, to enter into the spirit of the Church.

POINT III

ON THE GREAT AND PLEASING DUTIES WHICH THE RECURRENCE OF THIS FESTIVAL BRINGS TO OUR MINDS

Faith worked great things in the Magi; it made new men of them. — spiritual men, saints, apostles, martyrs. It is an ancient tradition that they were baptized by the Apostle St. Thomas, that they became themselves apostles and martyrs of the faith. The Church of the East and West honors them as saints, and people go even in our days to visit the remarkable relics of their venerated heads, carefully preserved ever since the twelfth century in the Cathedral of Cologne.

APPLICATION.— Jesus has shed on us in like manner the bright light of faith. It may be said to have grown and strengthened with us. We have been brought up from early childhood in the knowledge of its glorious mysteries; in the practice of its holy obligations. Let us prove our gratitude by unswerving fidelity to this great grace, so that it may produce in us, in ever-increasing abundance, the fruits of sanctity. It is for us a great and sacred duty. “*Fides per charitatem operatur.*” “Faith worketh by charity,” says the Apostle. (Gal. 5:6.) “*Amor, ubi est, magna operatur.*” “Where charity is,” adds the Pope St. Gregory, “it does great things.” Can this be said of you?

COLLOQUY with the holy Magi, the first among the Gentiles called to the knowledge of Christ. Let us beg through their intercession a constant increase of faith and love.

FIDELITY OF THE MAGI

IN OBEYING THE INSPIRATIONS OF GRACE.

1st Prel. I will contemplate the Magi following the star which leads them to the cradle of the Saviour.

2d Prel. I will ask fidelity to the inspirations of grace.

POINT I

THE KINGS CORRESPOND PROMPTLY WITH GRACE

Fidelity to grace supposes, first of all, promptitude in following its inspirations. That of the Magi was wonderful. A star of extraordinary brightness struck upon their sight; an interior voice made them understand its meaning; and immediately breaking all the ties which held them back, they set about following its guidance. They could say truly to King Herod, "We have seen his star in the East, and are come to adore Him." "Vidimus et venimus." (St. Matt. 2:2.) It is probable that many other wise men, who like them were watching the course of the planets, saw the star, and felt themselves interiorly moved to follow it; but they thought they ought to wait for further enlightenment. Their reasoning and their delays prevented them from enjoying the greatest of all favors—the happiness of seeing with their own eyes the Saviour of the world.

APPLICATION.—How many graces and merits have you also lost, perhaps by your delays in corresponding with the good inspirations which God has sent you; for, generally speaking, to delay is to neglect them. How many times has it not happened that you have had the good thought of utilizing some spare moments by doing an act of charity, paying a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, or some other good work? But you put it off, and nothing was done. Will not an examination of the past tell you that it has been thus?

AFFECTIONS.— Acknowledge with sincere repentance your continual neglect of Divine Grace.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will henceforth, after the example of the Wise Men, put speedily in practice the resolutions with which it may please God to inspire me.

POINT II

THE KINGS CORRESPOND GENEROUSLY WITH GRACE

Fidelity to grace supposes also generosity. This virtue consists in conquering the difficulties and apparent impossibilities which naturally terrify our self-love and our cowardice. This generosity was certainly needed by the Magi. The journey they had to undertake was long, the weather severe, and the roads hardly fit to traverse; besides, they knew not whither the star would lead them, and for what length of time they would be absent from their families and their affairs. They had also to meet the criticism and ridicule of their fellow-countrymen. Nothing of all this stopped them; they gave themselves up with an entire confidence to Him who had called them by these manifest signs.

APPLICATION.— Why am I so often unfaithful to grace — unfaithful even to the resolutions made during retreat and based upon the highest motives — unfaithful to certain practices of piety and mortification, the importance of which I know so well? Is it not very often because I fail in generosity — because I allow myself to be discouraged by the fear of imaginary difficulties?

AFFECTIONS.— Acknowledge this humbly before God. Repent sincerely of your past infidelity. Examine yourself as to the occasions on which you are wanting in generosity, and resolve to do better in future.

RESOLUTIONS.— In conformity with the light which God may confer on you at this moment.

POINT III

THE KINGS CORRESPOND PERSEVERINGLY WITH GRACE

CONSIDERATION.—Fidelity to grace supposes, in the third place, perseverance; for the full and entire realization of the good intentions inspired by grace is not always immediately possible: their accomplishment may often require continued exertion on our part for days and months together. The perseverance of the Magi was of this heroic character. No difficulty, however great, could shake their resolution; neither the inclemency of the season, the privations to be endured, the length of the journey, the disappearance of the star as they drew near to Jerusalem, nor even the inexplicable indifference manifested by the inhabitants of that city with regard to the great event announced by the star. God rewarded their constancy. The star reappeared and led them to the feet of our Divine Saviour.

APPLICATION.—How little do we persevere, and for how short a time! Where at noontide is the execution of the resolutions made in the morning? Has it not even happened to you often to be unfaithful, before the end of your undertakings, to the resolutions made when you began them? Is it astonishing, then, that we make so little progress? Let us try to do better from to-day. Let us beg of God, by the intercession of the holy Kings, the perseverance and generosity in which we have been wanting.

COLLOQUY.—Pray again earnestly to the Wise Men, and ask that, through their intercession, you may become more faithful in obeying the inspirations of grace — more generous and persevering in keeping the good resolutions which it inspires.

ON THREE INCIDENTS

OF THE JOURNEY OF THE MAGI

1st Prel. Contemplate the distress of the Wise Men on the disappearance of the star.

2d Prel. Pray for light to understand the signification of the different incidents of their journey, and grace to derive spiritual profit from the consideration.

POINT I

DISAPPEARANCE OF THE STAR

The Magi being near to Jerusalem, the star disappeared.

Deprived of this heavenly light, which had been until now their guide and their consolation, what were they to do? They were not discouraged; they went into the city. By the advice of King Herod, they betook themselves to the authorized teachers, to the doctors of the law, to learn from them where the Messiah should be born. On hearing the reply, that it would be at Bethlehem, they immediately took the road which should lead them thither.

APPLICATION.— God treats His faithful servants as He did the Magi. Sometimes He gives them light and consolation; sometimes He withdraws these, and leaves them alone in a sort of dark night, to try them, and to purify their faith and their love. What ought we, then, to do? Let us imitate the holy Kings; let us lay aside all discouragement; adore the designs of God; relax none of our duties or our pious practices, and, waiting for light to return to us, have recourse, with humility and docility, to the advice of our directors. Have you done this?

AFFECTIONS.— Express your readiness to conform to the will of God, whatever may be the trials or difficulties He may please to send you.

RESOLUTIONS.—In the words of St. Francis de Sales, “I wish to seek before all things and above all things not the consolations of God, but the God of consolations.”

POINT II

THE REAPPEARANCE OF THE STAR

God made no delay in rewarding the humble confidence and docility of the Magi. They had scarcely left Jerusalem, following the directions given to them, when the star reappeared, and, says St. Matthew, it “went before them, until it came and stood over where the child was. And seeing the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.” (St. Matt. 2 : 9, 10.)

APPLICATION.—Such is and such will always be the result of the desolations and divers trials through which God causes us to pass, provided we imitate the fidelity and constancy of the holy Kings. But alas! how often we are unfaithful and inconstant! Instead of persevering in our resolutions, and of having recourse to our spiritual guides, we become remiss and distracted, we go to beg consolation from creatures. Does not this apply to us?

AFFECTIONS.—Acknowledge your faults on this head with humility, shame, and repentance.

RESOLUTIONS.—To prove more faithful than heretofore in times of trial and temptation.

POINT III

THE PLACE WHERE THE STAR STOOD STILL

What must not have been the surprise of the Magi when they saw the spot over which the star stood! It was above a deserted stable, in which they found a little Infant wrapped in swaddling-clothes, lying on a little straw in a manger, in company with His Mother, whom no exterior sign distinguishes from other

women, an artisan, and some poor shepherds, who, we may believe, made repeated visits to and performed many acts of kindness for the Holy Family.* What a trial for their faith! How can they recognize in this Child the promised King of Israel, the Saviour of mankind? Here was enough to shock the susceptibilities of a proud heart—to loosen the foundations of a wavering faith; but the Magi were humble and God grants His grace to the humble. (St. James 4:6.) Suddenly grace enlightens them; they understand the great mystery of the voluntary humiliations of the Saviour God; they adore Him, and their souls are flooded with ineffable delight; the stable is changed for them into Paradise.

Recall all that you have heard, read, and meditated on concerning the necessity and excellence of humility, of the extraordinary gifts, of the wonderful graces with which God is pleased to enrich souls who are truly humble—who seek Him only, and live but for Him.

COLLOQUY.—Prostrate in spirit with the holy Kings at the feet of the Child Jesus, beg fervently the grace to advance constantly in the practice of humility, and to increase daily in perfection, as well during times of trial as in seasons of consolation.

* It is the opinion of Saint Augustine, Saint Jerome, and the greater number of the Fathers, that the Blessed Virgin remained in the birthplace of our Lord until the day of her Purification, and that the adoration of the Magi took place on the thirteenth day after Christmas. "*In præsepi tunc jacebat et Magis ab oriente ducebat.*" (S. Aug. Serm. de Epiph.) "*Hic involutus pannis, hic inventus a pastoribus, hic adoratus a Magis.*" (Hier. Ep. 17, ad Marcellam.)

ALARM, HYPOCRISY, AND DISAPPOINTMENT OF KING HEROD

1st Prel. Represent to yourself Jesus Christ saying, "Wo to you hypocrites!" (St. Matt. 23:13.)

2d Prel. Beg for singleness of heart and a pure intention.

POINT I

ALARM OF HEROD

At the question of the Magi where the King of the Jews, whose star they had seen, was born, Herod, says the Evangelist, "was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him." (St. Matt. 2:3.) Whence does this terrible and sudden alarm come upon King Herod? Was it some serious affair of state? From the fear that some misfortune will overtake the people committed to his care? No, it is selfishness, ambition, jealousy—in one word, passion.

APPLICATION.—Make a careful examination of yourself. You also are sometimes subject to trouble, to sadness, to discouragement; but whence does this arise? Is it from some reasonable cause? Because God is offended? because you have offended Him? because souls are lost? that the Church is persecuted? Is it not rather because you have been humbled, reprimanded, or your wishes contradicted? Because you were deprived of something to which you clung, or were afraid that such would be the case? It is passion, then, that is at the bottom of all this; pride, vanity, self-love, jealousy, or ill-regulated attachment to yourself and your own ease? Ought you not to own this? Examine yourself.

AFFECTIONS.—Beg of God to teach you to die to yourself, and ask of Him grace to understand well these words of the *Imitation*: "Oh! if we could always silence passion, what profound peace should we not enjoy."

RESOLUTIONS.— To endeavor to gain this peace by suppressing all ill-regulated feelings, from the moment we find them arising in our hearts.

POINT II

HYPOCRISY OF HEROD

The following is narrated of it in the Gospel: "Herod, privately calling the wise men, learned diligently of them the time of the star which appeared to them; and, sending them into Bethlehem, said: Go and diligently inquire after the Child; and when you have found Him, bring me word again, that I also may come and adore Him." (St. Matt. 2:7, 8.) What was Herod's real design in taking this step, which apparently arose from a feeling of respect and piety? We learn it from what followed. It was to find out the age and the dwelling of the Divine Child, that he might put Him to death; and in case of any doubt as to His identity, to include Him in a general massacre of all the children of the same age born in the neighborhood of Bethlehem. Was there ever a more abominable project concealed under blacker hypocrisy?

APPLICATION.— All hypocrisy, even when it does not serve as a mantle for crime, is odious to God and men. To a certain point, it is, however, more common than we think. To assume the appearance of virtue without caring about its reality, is hypocrisy. To obey orders, or conform to rule, only because we are observed, and to pretend that we approve of our superior and of his orders in his presence, whilst we condemn him in his absence, to speak otherwise than as we think, in order to obtain what we desire; to speak ill of one's self, so as to attract praise, and the like; all this is evidently a kind of hypocrisy.

AFFECTIONS.— Express before God your detestation of all deceits, dissimulation, and hypocrisy.

RESOLUTIONS.— Endeavor to merit the praise bestowed by Our Lord on Nathanael, “*Ecce vere Israëlita, in quo dolus non est.*” “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile!” (St. John 1 : 47.)

POINT III

DISAPPOINTMENT OF HEROD

“*Spes hypocritæ peribit.*” “The hope of the hypocrite shall perish,” says the Holy Ghost. (Job 8 : 13.) Herod gives a proof of this. The angel of the Lord ordered the Magi to return by another way; and later on, he told Joseph to fly with the Child into Egypt. By this, the wicked plans of King Herod were baffled; and the massacre of the children of Bethlehem only peopled heaven with new saints, while it drew down on the tyrant the execration of his fellow-men and of succeeding generations.

APPLICATION.— The impious men who never cease to persecute Jesus Christ in His Church and in her members can do nothing against us without God’s permission. Let us trust in Him; He knows how to turn all their plots to their confusion and to our advantage. The annals of ecclesiastical history furnish ample proof of this consoling truth, which is also proclaimed from heaven by the voices of millions of martyrs, to whom persecution was the source of increased glory and eternal happiness.

COLLOQUY with the Child Jesus, in conformity with the pious sentiments experienced during meditation.

THE OFFERING OF THE MAGI

1st Prel. I will represent to myself the Magi prostrate at the feet of Jesus, and presenting their gifts.

2d Prel. I will beg the grace of imitating them in their deep feelings of faith, generosity, and love.

POINT I

WHAT IS IT THAT THEY OFFER?

Among the Orientals, it is a generally received custom which continues to this day, that no one comes before a king or powerful prince without offering him presents. The Magi had taken care not to omit this custom. After having adored the Infant Jesus by prostrating themselves on the earth, they opened their treasures, and, says the Evangelist, "offered Him gifts — gold, frankincense, and myrrh." These presents were the most precious productions of their native land, but, by a secret arrangement of Providence, they also represented the three eminent characteristics of the Messiah. His eternal and universal royalty is represented by gold; His divinity by frankincense and His humanity by myrrh.

APPLICATION.—"Nec apparebis in conspectu meo vacuus." "Neither shalt thou appear before me empty." (Exod. 34:20.) Such was the precept given by the Lord to the people of Israel after He had enriched them with the spoils of Egypt. He gives the same to us, whom He has enriched with the spoils, or rather the infinite merits of the death of His well-beloved Son. Wherefore, says St. Chrysologus, it is a want of devotion if we adore God without offering Him something. Each time, then, that we prostrate ourselves at the foot of the holy tabernacle, let us add to our acts of adoration the offering of some mortification or some generous resolution.

AFFECTIONS.— Make an offering to Jesus of yourself, and of your desire to please Him daily more and more.

RESOLUTIONS.— To combine mortification with prayer; for instance, to kneel without support for the elbows, or to sit upright during at least a portion of the time allotted to prayer, or to the Divine Office.

POINT II

HOW DID THEY MAKE THEIR OFFERING?

The feelings which accompanied the presents of the Magi were their chief merit. What were these? Feelings of joy and generosity: they offered with all their hearts what they had most precious. Feelings of humility: they were grieved not to be able to offer Him gifts a thousand times more precious. Feelings of love and of the tenderest filial devotion: they bound themselves forever to the service of Him whom they recognized as their King and their God.

APPLICATION.— As religious, we have had the happiness of surpassing the Magi in what they then did. In making the three perpetual vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, we have offered and immolated ourselves on the altar of the love of God.

But the perfection of this immolation requires, on our part, repeated acts of self-abnegation. Let these be united with the feelings with which the Kings made their offerings, and all will be of great price in the eyes of God.

AFFECTIONS.— Let us rejoice that we are able to say, as David said in the days of his greatest service, “*In simplicitate cordis mei lætus obtuli universa.*” “I in the simplicity of my heart have joyfully offered all these things.” (I. Par. 29: 17.)

RESOLUTIONS.— I will frequently renew my vows, pre-figured as the holy Fathers teach, by the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

POINT III

HOW DOES JESUS RECEIVE WHAT THEY OFFER?

If it be true, as we can not doubt that it is, that God values our gifts, not according to their actual worth, but according to the feelings which accompany them, with what good-will must He have received the gifts of these pious worshipers! And if it is no less true that He *never lets Himself be outdone in generosity*, there can be no doubt that He gave them in return gifts infinitely more precious, the gifts of grace and of final perseverance.

APPLICATION.—How consoling and encouraging are these thoughts! They recall to our memory the promise given by Jesus Christ Himself, that our smallest offerings and our most trifling good actions, even if it be but a cup of cold water only, . . . shall not lose its reward. “*Quicumque potum dederit uni ex minimis istis calicem aquæ frigidæ tantum non perdet mercedem suam.*” (St. Matt. 10: 42.) Animated by this faith, encouraged by these words, let us often renew the good resolutions made during the morning prayer, in order that all our actions may be pleasing in the sight of God, and full of merit for eternal life.

COLLOQUY with the Infant Jesus. Offer yourself unreservedly to Him, renewing with all your heart the sacrifice you have already made when pronouncing your religious vows. Offer Him your pious desires and good resolutions, especially that of striving incessantly to render your actions more pleasing to Him by increased purity of intention and greater intensity of love.

HAPPINESS OF THE MAGI

1st Prel. Behold the Magi overwhelmed with joy prostrate at the feet of Jesus.

2d Prel. Beg the grace to share somewhat of this joy.

POINT I

THE MAGI ADMITTED TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS

One of the first thoughts that comes to the mind when we hear the gospel narrative of the calling of the Magi is the thought of the happiness which fell to their lot. What a happiness indeed, to have been miraculously called from the darkness of the Gentiles to the Divine light of the Incarnate Word; to have been taught the sublime lessons of the Gospel even before they were preached to the world! To what did the Magi owe this wonderful happiness in preference to so many millions who lived and died in infidelity and sin? Only to the mercy and predilection of the Saviour God.

APPLICATION.— You also have been the object of this same predilection of God, in this that he caused you to be born of Catholic parents, who taught you from your tenderest infancy the knowledge and love of Jesus. You might have been born, as so many are, of Pagan, Mohammedan, or Jewish parents, and how great then would have been your misery in time and eternity! To what do you owe your preservation, your being so richly supplied with means of salvation and of sanctification? Is it not solely to the mercy of your Saviour?

AFFECTIONS.— Joy and thanksgiving.

RESOLUTIONS.— Often call to mind these words of the Holy Ghost: “Unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required.” (St. Luke 12:48.)

POINT II

THE MAGI ADMITTED TO THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

We may believe that the three Kings staid more than one day at this happy resting-place after their long and difficult pilgrimage; that they had consequently the wonderful happiness of forming a part of the society of Jesus, which till then had been limited to Mary, Joseph, and a few shepherds. What happy hours they passed in that company! What graces they received from it, and how they congratulated themselves on having obeyed the invitation of the star!

APPLICATION.— This happiness you share with them. You, whom the star of vocation has led into a religious family, to which Jesus has deigned to bequeath His spirit and perhaps His name; in the midst of which He is pleased to mark His presence by a wonderful providence, and to shed on it His graces and favors with profusion; that privilege especially of being everywhere, like Him, the object of hatred to the wicked — what happy days, days rich in merit, are you permitted to pass in it, while waiting till the grace of perseverance shall lead you into the glorious society of Jesus in heaven!

AFFECTIONS.— Congratulate the Magi, and rejoice that, like them, you have been faithful to the star of your vocation.

RESOLUTION.— To let no day pass without thanking God for having called you to the religious state, and asking grace to persevere therein until death.

POINT III

THE MAGI ADMITTED TO THE KISS OF JESUS

We may also believe that the Magi not only contemplated at their leisure the beautiful countenance of the

Divine Child, but also, to crown their happiness, that they received Him from the loving hands of Mary into their arms; that they were permitted to cover Him with kisses and to press Him to their hearts. What blissful moments were these, and what abundance of light, love, and sanctity they must have received!

APPLICATION.— You envy their happiness, but do you not share it with them each time that you receive Him in Holy Communion? Then you are permitted not only to press Jesus in your arms and to your breast, but to receive Him into your heart, to be incorporated with Him, to be after a manner identified with Him. How is it, then, that, after so many Holy Communion, you are yet so little advanced in the love and intimacy of Jesus? Is it not because of the negligence and tepidity with which you approach the Holy Sacrament? Has not Communion, from its very frequency, become with you more or less a matter of routine? Alas! it is in the nature of man to become, from habit, so familiar with even the holiest things as to forget the reverence due to them. That such may not be your case, and that you may not lose the fruit of your communions, you should occasionally use beforehand the first of the six meditations to be found at the end of this volume, or the pages immediately following the above, entitled, *Pious Practices for Devout Communion*, or one of those chapters of the *Imitation* which are specially calculated to awaken and keep alive in our hearts sentiments of ardent piety before and after Holy Communion.

COLLOQUY.— Entreat the holy Magi to intercede for you with the Infant Jesus, and to obtain for you a share in the favors which they themselves received from the Divine Child.

ON THE GRACE OF VOCATION GIVEN TO THE MAGI

1st Prel. I will represent to myself Jesus Christ saying these words, "I have chosen you." (St. John 15: 16.)

2d Prel. I will beg the grace of a continual increase of reverence and love for my holy vocation.

POINT I

THE VOCATION OF THE MAGI WAS A PURELY GRATUITOUS GRACE

Certainly God was not obliged to diverge from the ordinary ways of Providence in their favor by calling them and guiding them by a miraculous star; and, on the other hand, it is not unlikely that among so many millions of Gentiles, there were many who had as much or more right than they had to be called to the knowledge of the Messiah. To what, then, did they owe the preference shown to them? Only to a love of gratuitous predilection.

APPLICATION.—And I—to what do I owe my vocation? Is it to the innocence and holiness of my youth? No, my conscience protests. Is it to the superiority of my moral and physical qualities? No, for I have known many far superior to me in these respects. To what, then, do I owe it? Only to the free choice of the Lord, to a predilection altogether gratuitous. "Non vos me elegistis, sed ego elegi vos." "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." (St. John 15: 16.) These are the words of Jesus.

AFFECTIONS.—Say with heartfelt joy and fervent gratitude in the words of the Apostle, "Gratia Dei sum id quod sum." "By the grace of God, I am what I am." (I. Cor. 15: 10.)

RESOLUTIONS.— I will endeavor to verify in my own case the words of the same Apostle, "*Et gratia ejus in me vacua non fuit.*" "His grace in me hath not been void." (I. Cor. 15: 10.)

POINT II

THE VOCATION OF THE MAGI WAS A GRACE OF CONVERSION

Born, educated, and living in the midst of heathen darkness and vice, it is to be presumed that the Magi were walking with the majority in the broad path that leads to destruction. The grace of conversion drew them away forever from it, set them in the straight paths of justice, and made them new men in Jesus Christ our Saviour.

APPLICATION.— Where were you before the star of vocation rose to enlighten you? You were in the midst of a corrupted and corrupting world; all that you saw and heard tended to evil; and how did you then live? How far did you allow yourself to be carried along by the torrent of seduction and of vice? Recall your past life. See in what sins, and perhaps in what habitual sins, you were living. Where would this life have led you, if not to your eternal ruin? The grace of your vocation drew you away, and brought you into the narrow path of virtue and salvation. Happy vocation! It was for you also a "grace of conversion."

AFFECTIONS.— Express your gratitude, and your unwavering confidence in the goodness of God, "*Qui de tenebris vos vocavit in admirabile lumen suum.*" "Who hath called you," says the Apostle St. Peter, "out of darkness into His marvelous light." (I. St. Pet. 2: 9.)

RESOLUTIONS.— To make renewed efforts to expiate your past sins, and by great generosity in the service of God, to correspond with the graces conferred on you.

POINT III

THE VOCATION OF THE MAGI WAS A GRACE OF SANCTIFICATION

It made them see clearly the nothingness of all that is not God, and filled their hearts with the holy ardor of charity. From henceforth they made rapid progress in the practice of exalted virtue. All the three are honored with the titles of saints, and have been invoked for eighteen centuries in the whole Church.

APPLICATION.—It is the light and unction of your grace of vocation that has shown you the vanity of the world, that has broken the bonds which bound you to it, and made you resolutely enter on a state of life where you make an open profession of tending to perfection. To conquer your human inconstancy, you are bound by perpetual vows. These vows contain for you at once the obligation of tending toward sanctity, and the most efficacious means of attaining it. Be faithful to them, and you will one day be the companions in glory and happiness of the holy Kings in heaven.

COLLOQUY with the Magi, now glorified in heaven. Congratulate them. Rejoice for and with them. Beg of them earnestly to obtain for you the grace of increased esteem and love for your holy vocation; and that, advancing continually in holiness, you may persevere to your last breath in the religious state which you have chosen.

DEPARTURE OF THE MAGI,

AND THEIR RETURN TO THEIR COUNTRY

1st Prel. To imagine I see the Magi prostrate at the feet of Jesus before they depart.

2d Prel. I will beg the grace never to leave the presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist without the feelings that were then in their hearts.

POINT I

DEPARTURE OF THE MAGI

It will be always difficult for us, or rather impossible, to form even a somewhat exact idea of the happiness and spiritual delight which the Magi tasted in the company of the Infant Jesus. Oh! how willingly would they have passed their lives there! But they were obliged to separate from Him; and how did they part? With great regret; thanking Him with all their hearts for having so marvelously called them to Him; begging His blessing and His help; consecrating themselves entirely to His interests and glory; inflamed with the desire to make Him known and loved by all men.

APPLICATION.— Thus ought we to go from the presence of Jesus Christ each time that we visit Him in the Sacrament of His love, or receive Him in Holy Communion. Has it been thus? Have you not often left Him without having done none of all this; but rather with strange coldness, strange insensibility? Perhaps because you had approached Him with too little faith, too little earnestness.

AFFECTIONS.— Self-abasement and contrition.

RESOLUTIONS.— Endeavor by fervor in the service of God to atone for your past tepidity.

POINT II

RETURN OF THE MAGI

“Having received an answer in sleep, that they should not return to Herod, they went back another way into their country.” (St. Matt. 2:12.) We might add, that they went back with other feelings, far more perfect than those which had animated them before; feelings not simply of a pious curiosity, but of an entire abnegation of themselves; contempt of the possessions of earth; a perfect love for Jesus, and an ardent desire to work and suffer much for Him. These were the wonderful effects of the intimate communications that they had enjoyed with the Author of all good and all sanctity.

APPLICATION.—Such ought to be the result and the fruit of our communications with God in meditation, Mass, visits, and especially our Holy Communions. And wherefore is it not thus? Do not these holy exercises bring us into intimate contact with the same God who wrought such a happy change in the minds and hearts of the Magi? If it be not thus, some obstacle must be in the way. What is this obstacle with you?

AFFECTIONS.—Grant me grace, O Lord! to discover this obstacle, and to overcome it.

RESOLUTIONS.—To adopt the most efficacious means for attaining this end.

POINT III

PERSEVERANCE OF THE MAGI

The honors that the Church renders to the Magi, and the veneration with which she preserves their wonderful relics, is a certain proof that they persevered in fervor and in the pious sentiments they had learnt at the foot of the manger of Bethlehem; and that they preserved in them not only for a few months, but dur-

ing the thirty-three years which elapsed before the Gospel was preached, when they were made Christians by Baptism, and soon after sealed their profession of the faith with their blood.

APPLICATION.—Look unto yourself. Remember what was your fervor during the happy years of your novitiate. That fervor, which has been constantly encouraged by your spiritual directors since that time, should have been continually on the increase: has it not been rather the contrary with you? Have you not fallen off from your early fervor? Are you as zealous as heretofore in the performance of your spiritual exercises — in the strict observance of religious rule — in profiting of every opportunity for the practice of humility, mortification, and charity? If this examination tend to show that you have failed in these particulars, and to overwhelm you with confusion, you must not therefore be discouraged. This knowledge will prove beneficial to you, and will lead you back to the right path — the path of progress.

COLLOQUY with your Angel Guardian. Beg of him, by his holy inspirations, to reawaken within you the spirit of your early fervor, and should you again fall away, to inspire you with sentiments of salutary remorse.

THREE THOUGHTS,

USEFUL TO REANIMATE YOUR FERVOR ON WAKING
EACH MORNING

1st *Prel.* I will imagine I hear Jesus Christ say these words,
"If thou didst know the gift of God in this thy day." (St.
John 4: 10; St. Luke 19: 42.)

2d *Prel.* I will beg the grace of increasing in fervor during the
whole course of this year.

POINT I

May the fruit of the Octave of the Epiphany be an increase of fervor in us! Let us try to animate ourselves every day from our first waking, by one or another of the three thoughts which will be the subject of this Meditation.

FIRST THOUGHT.— *This day is given to me only to glorify God, to heap up merits for heaven.* Yesterday is no longer mine, to-morrow is uncertain, to-day is in my possession. How happy I shall be this evening, if I have spent the day holily, and have not lost any of it! God will demand from me a strict account of this day, because there is not one that I ought not to use for His glory, and which I can not use to gain my eternal happiness.

APPLICATION.— Is this thought often before my mind when I wake? Do I occupy myself earnestly with it while I dress? It is well calculated to awaken generous feelings in us, and to keep the warmth of our fervor alive. It produced this effect on the Saints, and produces it now daily in many religious, who are in earnest about their spiritual advancement.

AFFECTIONS.— I acknowledge, O Lord! that I frequently neglect to occupy myself, during the first moments of the day, with this or any other good thought.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will endeavor to guard against this tepidity of spirit, which leads me to begin the day in such an imperfect manner.

POINT II

SECOND THOUGHT.— *God has attached to this day graces, perhaps special ones, which ought to contribute powerfully to my advancement and to my final perseverance.* To what dangers, then, shall I not expose myself by neglecting to correspond with them? What regrets shall I have later on! What a loss will be the result for me in time and eternity!

APPLICATION.— This second thought will make us throughout the day attentive and docile to the inspirations of grace; let us, however, acknowledge that, either from dissipation or cowardice, it has not always been thus — that often *we receive the gift of God in vain.* And ought it not to make us fear lest we incur the blame and the punishment reserved for the ungrateful?

AFFECTIONS.— A salutary fear of abusing Divine grace. Regret for having neglected so many opportunities of acquiring increased merit and sanctity.

RESOLUTIONS.— To reflect often on these words addressed by our Lord to the ungrateful and obdurate inhabitants of Jerusalem: “If thou didst know the gift of God, which is given to thee this day.” (St. John 4: 10; St. Luke 19: 42.)

POINT III

THIRD THOUGHT.— *This day perhaps will be your last.* It will really be so for a hundred thousand of my fellow-creatures. According to statistics, that is about the number of deaths daily. Who can assure me I shall not be among the number? If I knew that it was to be so, what should I do to-day? With what scrupulous attention should I avoid the smallest sin! With what ardor should I devote myself to perform all my actions well, even the smallest, and to omit nothing to render myself more pleasing in God's sight! Nothing further is needed to sanctify me.

APPLICATION.— We have an infallible means of attaining this happy result; it is, to follow the counsel that St. Anthony gave to his disciples. “My dear children,” said he, “try to live each day as if it were to be the last of your life.” It was by following this counsel that many saints in a short space of time attained a high degree of sanctity. One of them was the blessed John Berchmans, who, while still a novice in the Society of Jesus, heard a discourse on the above words of St. Anthony, and resolved immediately to make them his rule of life. This we learn from the following sentence written by him, and preserved to this day: “*Vivam in dies, nihil sollicitus de crastino.*” “*I will live from day to day, devoted to the work of my sanctification, without being solicitous for the morrow, as if there were to be none for me.*” Let us do in like manner. Let us follow the same rule. Let us recall it to mind each morning of our lives, and, like the saintly youth above named, we shall not fail to make rapid progress in virtue. *Our days will be full*, as the Holy Scripture expresses it — full of merit and good works. “*Dies pleni invenientur in eis.*” (Psalm 72: 10.)

COLLOQUY with your Guardian Angel. Beg of him to suggest to you each morning one or other of these thoughts, and to aid you to acquire the habit of occupying your mind with it. Have recourse also to the intercession of the great St. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, and Doctor of the Church, whose Feast we celebrate this day.

MYSTERIES ACCOMPLISHED IN THE TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM ON THE
FORTIETH DAY AFTER THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

PURIFICATION OF THE MOTHER OF JESUS

SUBLIME VIRTUES OF WHICH SHE GIVES US THE EXAMPLE

1st Prel. I will represent to myself our Lady humbly presenting herself at the entrance of the Temple.

2d Prel. I will beg the grace to imitate her in the virtues of which she gives us the example.

POINT I

OBEDIENCE OF MARY

The fortieth day after the birth of Jesus, Mary went to the Temple, as the law of Moses prescribed, to be purified — not from sin, but from the legal stain that she was accounted to have contracted like other mothers. It was not necessary for Mary to do so, become a mother by the operation of the Holy Spirit, and remaining a virgin. She had not therefore contracted any legal spot, and the law of purification was not binding on her. However, she submitted to it from love of the law, and to avoid giving scandal to her neighbors, who were ignorant of the great mystery worked in her favor.

APPLICATION.— Do you not remark a great contrast between your obedience and that of our Blessed Lady? She obeyed in difficult matters, although she was really exempt; and you escape under a slight pretext from easy and light observances. Have you not often been guilty of this, and in certain circumstances, to the detriment of the edification which you owe your brethren?

AFFECTIONS.— Shame and regrets for your past faults.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will endeavor to follow Mary's example by looking upon the rules, and all practices

prescribed by obedience, as manifestations of the Divine Will.

POINT II

HUMILITY OF MARY

In submitting to the law of purification, Mary consented to lose the prestige of one of her great privileges. She lost in the eyes of men the glory of her virginity, of which she was so jealous, by being reckoned among the other women in the outer court of the Temple. She passed for an ordinary woman, who needs purification before she can be admitted to the second court. But Mary was humble. She delighted in humiliations, and she believed that God knew her virginal purity, and that was sufficient. She was little disturbed at the judgments of men.

APPLICATION.—Do we reason thus? Do we act in this manner? Alas! little anxious to be stainless before God, we devote all our efforts to appear spotless before men; and, provided that we do not incur reprimand from our superiors or blame from our equals, we flatter ourselves that all is well — that we are all right before God. What a fatal delusion!

AFFECTIONS.—These may be taken from the words of the Apocalypse: “*Dicis, Quod dives sum, et nullus ego; et nescis quia tu es miser, et cæcus, et nudus.*” “Thou sayest, I am rich, and made wealthy, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” (Apoc. 3: 17.)

RESOLUTIONS.—I will frequently ask myself these questions: What am I in the sight of God? If I were now to appear before the tribunal of His infinite justice, what would be my fate? What should I find at which to grieve or rejoice in the memory of my past life?

POINT III

MARY'S SPIRIT OF POVERTY

CONSIDERATION.— The law of purification, enjoined on the mother to offer as a holocaust, by the hands of the priest, a lamb of the first year and a dove, or at least two doves or two young pigeons. The former was the offering of the rich, the latter of the poor. We should imagine that Mary could, with the gold the Magi had brought, have made the offering of the rich; but for love of humility she was contented to make that of the poor. Where did she learn that esteem and love of voluntary poverty, of which no daughter of Juda had ever given her the example? It was doubtless from the example of her Divine Son, who chose to be born in a stable, in the midst of complete privation.

APPLICATION.— Let us have, like her, ever before our eyes, Jesus, the King of heaven and earth, becoming for our sakes so poor that "He had not where to lay His head," as He told us Himself; and after the example of Mary, we shall also have an esteem for poverty; we shall love it as our mother; we shall not regret sometimes to feel its effects.

COLLOQUY with the Blessed Virgin. Let us ask her to obtain for us a great esteem and love for obedience, humility, and religious poverty. Let us ask the intercession with her of St. Paul, the first hermit, who is honored and invoked, on this his Festival, throughout the Christian world.

PRESENTATION OF THE INFANT JESUS

IN THE TEMPLE

1st Prel. Look at our Lady offering the Infant Jesus to the Eternal Father.

2d Prel. Beg grace from God to make offerings to Him worthy of Him.

POINT I

MARY CARRIES THE INFANT JESUS TO THE TEMPLE

CONSIDERATION.—“ They carried Him to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord, as it is written in the law of the Lord.” (St. Luke 2: 22, 23.)

According to this law, added to that of the purification, the parents were obliged to bring their first-born, to offer him to God, and to redeem him with five *shekels* or a hundred oboli, in token of gratitude that the destroying angel had spared the first-born of the Hebrews on the night on which he struck dead those of the Egyptians.

APPLICATION.—This law plainly teaches us that God loves or rather exacts from us a grateful remembrance of our preservation from harm, and of the favors which He has poured upon us. Recall to your mind the evils of body and soul that God has averted from you, and the innumerable favors both of nature and grace which He has poured upon you, and ask yourself, has my gratitude been always in proportion to so many benefits? Have I at least preserved a grateful remembrance of them?

AFFECTIONS.—“ What shall I render to the Lord for all the things that He hath rendered to me? ” (Ps. 115: 12.)

RESOLUTIONS.—I will call to mind the gratitude I owe to God, particularly when, at Mass, I hear the words, “ *Gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro.* ” “ Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.”

POINT II

MARY OFFERS THE INFANT JESUS TO THE LORD

CONSIDERATION.— The offering that Mary made of her Son was, in every respect, infinitely more perfect than that of other mothers. For them the presentation and the redemption of their first-born was but an act of obedience to the law — a legal ceremony, followed by a feast or family rejoicing, which occupied the greater part of the day.

Mary, on the contrary, in reality offered and sacrificed her well-beloved Child to the Lord as a victim which was one day to be immolated for the redemption of the world, and with a heart full of sublime feelings she spent the day in recollection, prayer, and good works, without omitting any thing which propriety demanded.

APPLICATION.— Let us endeavor, like Mary, to render our offerings pleasing to the Lord, making them in a spirit of faith and love. Let us also celebrate worthily the Lord's Day and the principal feasts of the year. These holy days are nothing more, alas! to many Christians who abstain from profaning them, than days of relaxation, enjoyment, and good cheer; and the beautiful ceremonies of the Church are only to them pious amusements. How few there are who sanctify these holy days as they ought to be sanctified! Does not conscience reproach you on one or other of these heads? Examine yourself on this point, and if you are guilty, humble yourself profoundly before God.

RESOLUTIONS.— To do better in future; and to guard against making what should be a mere accessory of the Festival its principal object. Our Lord appears to allude to this deplorable abuse when he says, "*Nonne anima plus est quam esca?*" "Is not the life more than the food?" (St. Luke 12: 23.) As does also the Apostle in these words: "*Non est regnum*

Dei potus et esca. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink." (Rom. 14: 17.)

POINT III

JESUS OFFERS HIMSELF BY THE HANDS OF MARY

CONSIDERATION.—While Mary presented and offered up to the Lord her dear Child, He, possessing the full and perfect use of His reason, though He did not let it appear, offered Himself by Mary's hands to God His Father as the most worthy victim, of which all the preceding ones had been only the types.

APPLICATION.—Jesus willed that His whole mortal life, not excepting His tenderest infancy, should be a continual immolation of Himself — an uninterrupted act of love; and we — we have begun so late to love Him, to devote ourselves to His Divine service! Would that, even since consecrating ourselves to Him, we had had less tepidity and unfaithfulness wherewith to reproach ourselves. Nevertheless, far from being discouraged, we should, with the aid of His grace, endeavor to repair our past errors and negligence by increased fervor and generosity. Let us resolve henceforth to do so.

COLLOQUY with the Blessed Virgin. Beg of her to offer us to Jesus, to intercede for us, and to obtain for us the spirit of self-sacrifice, mortification, and fervor.

MEETING OF SIMEON AND THE INFANT JESUS

IN THE TEMPLE

1st Prel. Represent to yourself Simeon holding the Infant Jesus in his arms.

2d Prel. Beg the grace to share in the favors which were poured on the holy old man.

POINT I

THE OLD MAN SIMEON GUIDED BY THE HOLY GHOST

CONSIDERATION.—"There was in Jerusalem," says St. Luke, "a man named Simeon; and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Ghost was in him. And he came by the Spirit into the Temple; and His parents brought in the Child Jesus to do for Him according to the custom of the law." (St. Luke 2:25, 27.) How was it that the holy old man came into the Temple at the precise day, hour, and moment when Mary entered with her Divine Child? Because he was led by the Spirit of God, who, by secret inspirations, guided all his steps and all his actions; a favor that he had merited by his piety, his ardent faith, and his habitual docility to the inspirations of grace.

APPLICATION.—Happy is the man, happy is the religious who has the Holy Ghost for his guide! He will escape many dangers; he will have daily occasions of practising virtue and of increasing in merit; while the Christian who is guided by the spirit of the world will fall from error into error, from precipice to precipice. Have you not in your time experienced this?

AFFECTIONS.—Deign, O Lord! in all things, to guide and direct me by the light of Thy Holy Spirit.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will endeavor to merit this favor by the practice of piety, recollection, and docility to the inspirations of grace.

POINT II

THE OLD MAN SIMEON ENLIGHTENED BY THE HOLY GHOST

CONSIDERATION.—The Divine Child whom Mary bore in her arms had nothing to distinguish Him in the eyes of men from other children. His Divinity was veiled under the feeble tokens of humanity. So He was not remarked either by the priests or their assistants. Simeon alone, suddenly enlightened by the Holy Ghost, pierced the veil; recognized in the feeble infant the “Word made flesh,” the Messiah expected for four thousand years, and cried out, “Now Thou dost dismiss Thy servant, O Lord! according to Thy word, in peace. Because my eyes have seen Thy salvation, a light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.” (Luke 2:29, 30, 32.)

APPLICATION.—What a difference between the worldly man, however clever he may be, and the holy man, guided by the light of the Holy Ghost! The one sees only with his bodily eyes; the other sees also with the eyes of faith. The one sees in creatures only the material part, that which is captivating, and to which he gives his heart; the other sees the infinite perfections of God, and continually unites himself to God by means of creatures. Which of these two do you resemble?

AFFECTIONS.—Come, Holy Ghost, send down from heaven a ray of Thy light; that it may direct my steps, and lead me to the haven of salvation. (Prayer of the Church.)

RESOLUTIONS.—I will be faithful to the practice of invoking the Holy Ghost in all doubts and difficulties. I will endeavor to admire in creatures the perfections of God.

POINT III

**THE FAVORS POURED BY THE HOLY GHOST ON THE
HOLY OLD MAN SIMEON**

CONSIDERATION.—"Responsum acceperat a Spiritu Sancto, non visurum se mortem, nisi prius videret Christum Domini." "The Holy Ghost," adds St. Luke, "had told Simeon, just and devout, that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord." (St. Luke 2:26.) God is faithful to His promises. Generally He gives more than He promises. Here is a proof of it; for it was given to Simeon not only to see the Infant Jesus, but, further, to receive Him into his arms. "Et ipse accepit eum in ulnas suas." "He also took Him into his arms." (St. Luke 2:28.) With what wonderful delight his soul was then filled! How many graces and favors were then poured on him! And his death, oh! how precious it will be in the eyes of the Lord—full of joy and consolation!

APPLICATION.—The reason why Simeon had such extraordinary graces vouchsafed to him was, that his life had been entirely passed in the love and service of God. If your life has not always been thus spent, let it at least be so for the future, and you will have a well-founded hope, or rather an assurance, of dying also in the peace and joy of the Lord.

COLLOQUY with the holy and happy Simeon, in conformity with the pious emotions experienced during meditation.

ON THE WORDS,

“NUNC DIMITTIS SERVUM TUUM IN PACE”

1st Prel. I will picture to myself Simeon at the moment when he said these words, “Now Thou dost dismiss Thy servant, O Lord! according to Thy word, in peace.” (St. Luke 2:29.)

2d Prel. I will beg the grace of sharing at my death in the disposition of the holy old man.

POINT I

TWO DISPOSITIONS REGARDING DEATH

CONSIDERATION.—“Now Thou dost dismiss Thy servant in peace.” Simeon, after having seen the promised Redeemer, begged to die. He looked upon himself only as a prisoner who desired to escape at once. And, in fact, since the sin of Adam, this mortal body, which was a palace for the soul in a state of innocence, is now only a dark and miserable prison. The Christian and the religious who are unfaithful to their duties leave it with regret, like state prisoners who are only expecting a sentence of death from their judges; the faithful Christian and religious, on the contrary, quit it not only with resignation, but with joy, as the prisoner unjustly accused goes forth, to whom judgment will be but a restoration and a triumph.

APPLICATION.—Which of these will you resemble at your last hour? What will be your dispositions then? The future, you will say, is hidden from us; and that is true. However, as death is generally but the echo of life, ask yourself, “If now I had to appear before my Judge, what would be my dispositions?” And when you have the answer to that question, you will know what remains for you to do, that you may have nothing to fear from death, but everything to hope.

AFFECTIONS.—Express your desire to acquire self-

knowledge, and to attain a higher degree of perfection.

RESOLUTIONS.—To detach your heart ever more and more from all inordinate and earthly affections.

POINT II

TWO LAWFUL REASONS FOR DESIRING DEATH

CONSIDERATIONS.—"Quis me liberabit de corpore mortis hujus?" "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:24.) "Desiderium habens dissolvi et esse cum Christo." "I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ." (Philipp. 1:23.) In these two texts, or rather in this double sigh which bursts from the heart of the Apostle, we find two lawful motives for desiring death; the first is, to be freed from the miseries of life, especially from the necessity of fighting continually against the desires of the flesh and the rebellion of the senses; the second is, to see Jesus, the Spouse of our souls, in His glory, to be more intimately united with Him, and to be able to love Him with a perfect and unchangeable love. Both are lawful, but the second is more perfect than the first.

APPLICATION.—We are religious, we have renounced the deceitful pleasures of the world: on the other hand, we groan continually under the inseparable sufferings of soul and body, and nevertheless we are still so attached to the world. We fear to leave it, to cross the threshold of death, which ought to lead us to those joys of Paradise that Jesus Christ has promised us. What can this proceed from, if not from our want of faith and confidence? To us also Jesus makes this reproach, "*Modicæ fidei, quare dubitasti?*" "O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?" (St. Matt. 14:31.)

AFFECTIONS.—Let us soar on the wings of faith to the contemplation of the ineffable happiness of heaven, and sigh for the moment which is to unite us to Christ.

RESOLUTIONS.—To endure courageously the trials of this life, in expectation of the joys of heaven.

POINT III

TWO MEANS OF ASSURING A HAPPY DEATH

CONSIDERATION.—"Non potest male mori, qui bene vixerit." "It can not be," says St. Austin, "that he who has lived well should have a miserable death." The first and surest means, then, of making a good and holy death is to live well — to live as a good Christian and a good religious. Without that, we are under a delusion, or presumptuous; for "Ast vix fieri potest, ut bene moriatur, qui male vixerit." "It is rare," adds the same saint, "that we die well if we have not lived well." The second means is pointed out to us by the author of the *Imitation*: "Beatus qui horam mortis suæ semper ante oculos habet." "Happy is the man who has the thought of death ever before his mind." (1. Book, xxiii.) It consists in frequently recalling the thought of death — especially in difficult temptations — to ask ourselves, then, what should I think of this at the hour of death?

APPLICATION.—See how far you are careful and faithful in practising these means of obtaining that greatest of all blessings — a holy death. Weigh well the importance of it, and you will be faithful. You will spend each day, beginning from this one, as you will wish to have spent it at the hour of death.

COLLOQUY with St. Joseph, patron of a happy death.

PROPHECIES OF THE HOLY OLD MAN SIMEON

1st Prel. I will imagine that I see Mary listening to the words of the holy old man Simeon.

2d Prel. I will ask the knowledge of these mysteries which faith has revealed to us.

POINT I

PROPHECIES RELATING TO JESUS

CONSIDERATION.—When giving back the Infant Jesus to Mary, Simeon, suddenly enlightened as to the future, uttered these memorable words, “*Positus est hic in ruinam et in resurrectionem multorum in Israel, et in signum cui contradicatur.*” “This Child is set for the fall or for resurrection of many, and for a sign that shall be contradicted.” (St. Luke 2: 34.) The eighteen centuries which have passed since this prophecy was uttered have proved its truth, and especially the time in which we live — a time in which we see wonderful conversions and spiritual resurrections brought about by the zeal of so many missionaries; and also systematic and impious opposition to the Church of Jesus Christ on the part of those who are reckoned among His disciples.

APPLICATION.—But can it be possible that Jesus, our loving Saviour, can become for a religious — for yourself, if you do not take care — the occasion of spiritual ruin, of a greater reprobation? Yes; and ecclesiastical history can furnish, alas! too many proofs of it. How many religious we see who, losing little by little the spirit of their holy state, have resumed the spirit of the world — who have become the living *contradictions* of the maxims of Jesus Christ, and whose *ruin* has been more fatal and terrible because they have had so many graces and blessings poured on them.

AFFECTIONS.— We should distrust ourselves, and have recourse to God, while promising fidelity in His service.

RESOLUTIONS.— To be always docile and humble under the mighty hand of God, lest otherwise we may fall into illusion, spiritual torpor, or infidelity.

POINT II

PROPHECIES RELATING TO MARY

CONSIDERATION.— Simeon, having spoken thus prophetically of the Infant Jesus, turned to the Mother, and addressed her in these heart-rending words, “*Et tuam ipsius animam pertransibit gladius.*” “And thy own soul a sword shall pierce.” (St. Luke 2:35.) This prophecy, strictly speaking, was not to be fulfilled till on Calvary the soul of Mary underwent inexpressible sufferings, and bore the most cruel martyrdom; when she saw her Divine Son dying on the Cross and was unable to die with Him. But may we not say that this martyrdom, by the anticipated knowledge that was given to her, began from this day, and was thus a martyrdom of thirty-three years’ duration? A martyrdom without parallel; and so much more meritorious before God, that it was not visible to the eyes of men, and no one could lessen its bitterness by compassion.

APPLICATION.— When you have to endure sufferings, and sometimes severe ones, of soul or body, which are not visible to others, and which no one thinks of pitying, console yourself that you have some resemblance to your Mother; console yourself with her by the thought that God is witness of your martyrdom, and that He is pleased with the offering that you make, to endure it all your life for love of Him. Oh! what merit does an unknown martyrdom possess before God, and what wonderful consolation there is for a religious or a Christian who loves to have it known only by God! What has been your way of acting in moments of trial and desolation?

AFFECTIONS.— Queen of martyrs, pray for me, who find it so difficult to suffer in silence, and without sensible consolation.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will henceforth endeavor to imitate my beloved Mother, by suffering at least in silence, and with resignation to God's will.

POINT III

PROPHECIES RELATING TO MEN

CONSIDERATION.—" Ut revelentur ex multis cordibus cogitationes." "That," added Simeon, "out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed." (St. Luke 2:35.) When persecutions arise against Jesus and His disciples, then shall the true dispositions of those who called themselves His children be revealed; then shall it be seen if these truly loved God, if they were prepared to lose all, to sacrifice all — possessions, repose, health, friends, reputation, and even life itself, rather than displease and forsake Him, rather than lose Him by sin, and in so doing, lose themselves also.

APPLICATION.— Alas! your love for God has not, perhaps, been sufficiently strong to hold out against censure or derision, against even the least symptoms of disapprobation from your fellow-creatures. Humble yourself before God for your want of firmness, perseverance, and generosity; try to have always before your mind those words of Jesus Christ: "Fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body in hell." (St. Matt. 10:28.) They will arm you with the strength and courage requisite for the accomplishment of your chief work, that of your eternal salvation.

COLLOQUY with Jesus, the author of our salvation, and with His Holy Mother, whom He appoints to dispense His graces to us.

IMPORTANCE TO SALVATION

1st Prel. Represent to yourself Jesus Christ saying these words, "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice." (St. Matt. 6: 33.)

2d Prel. Beg for a strong impulse of the will to act in all things according to the sense of these words.

POINT I

CONSIDERATION.—*The business of salvation is doubtless the most important of all others, because it is a business which concerns eternity.* To pass from this world to a happy eternity, and thus to escape everlasting punishment, is what we mean by the words, "Work out your salvation." The business of salvation, then, is the business of eternity—the eternity of our soul and body. All other affairs, however important we may think them, are not and can not be more than affairs of time. And what is time? what are sixty or eighty years compared to eternity?

APPLICATION.—What blindness and folly it is, then, to busy ourselves and disquiet ourselves more for the interests of time than those of eternity; to lose, or even expose ourselves to the danger of losing, eternal salvation for the momentary enjoyment of some terrestrial happiness or some sensual pleasure! Nevertheless, such is the blindness and folly of the greater number of men. Look at what is passing around you. Has not this folly been yours? Is it not still yours in some respects?

AFFECTIONS.—Lament the sins of mankind, mourn over your own past sins, and your present insensibility.

RESOLUTIONS.—During this year, of which twenty days have already passed away, to seek in all things and above all things to please God, and to lay up treasures for eternity, according to the precept of our Lord, "Quærite ergo primum regnum Dei et justitiam ejus."

“Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice.” (St. Matt. 6: 33.)

POINT II

CONSIDERATION.—*The business of salvation is doubtless the most important of all, because, if we once fail, the loss is irreparable.* For all other misfortunes there is a remedy: we can do over again a work that is spoilt; we can recover a lost fortune; we can rebuild a house burnt down; but if salvation be once lost, the evil is without remedy — *semel periisse æternum est periisse.* We shall not return to life; we shall not come forth from hell. “*Ibunt hi in supplicium æternum.*” “These shall go,” said Jesus Christ, “into everlasting punishment.” (St. Matt. 25: 46.)

APPLICATION.—What conclusion ought we to draw from this consideration? St. Paul tells us: “*Cum metu et tremore vestram salutem operamini.*” “With fear and trembling, work out your salvation.” (Philipp. 2: 12.) And think not that this conclusion does not strictly apply to you, because you are in the religious state; for the Apostle, though confirmed in grace, applies it to himself. “*Ego in timore et tremore multo fui apud vos.*” “I was with you,” writes he to the Corinthians, “in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.” (I. Cor. 2: 3.) And again, “*Castigo corpus meum et in servitutem redigo, ne forte cum aliis predicaverim, ipse reprobus efficiar.*” “I chastise my body and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway.” (I. Cor. 9: 27.) “Ah!” exclaimed Pope St. Gregory, “*nulla satis magna securitas, ubi periclitatur æternitas.*” “We ought never to think we have done enough when there is question of eternity.” And besides, did not the angels sin in heaven, and fall from heaven into hell?

AFFECTIONS.—Salutary fear, distrust of ourselves.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will carefully endeavor to discover and conquer those irregular inclinations which are the chief obstacle to salvation.

POINT III

CONSIDERATION.— *The business of salvation is the most important of all, because it is the only business absolutely necessary.* Many things are *relatively* necessary. An office is confided to you; you are obliged in conscience to do what it requires from you. That is necessary, but not *absolutely* so. God can do it without you; others can do it for you. What alone is *absolutely* necessary, if you wish to escape hell, is, that by your own endeavors, you should work out your own salvation. It is a personal affair; no one can do it for you — neither your superiors, nor your brethren, nor even God. “He who created you without your help,” says St. Austin, “can not save you without it.”

APPLICATION.— Woe, then, to the religious who has not either the principle or desire of his own sanctification! The vigilance of his superiors can indeed restrain him within the bounds of external regularity; but they can not save him or sanctify him. He has reason to fear lest in the midst of so many means of salvation he should be lost. “Therefore,” says the author of the *Imitation*, “however it may be with others, neglect not thyself.” (I. Book, xxv.)

COLLOQUY with the saint whose Festival the Church celebrates this day, the great Sebastian, who, to secure his salvation, sacrificed the friendship of the Roman Emperors, and delivered himself up to die, pierced with arrows, in the midst of fearful torments, (A. D. 288).

HOW TO KNOW THE IMPORTANCE

WHICH BELONGS TO THE BUSINESS OF OUR SALVATION

1st Prel. Represent to yourself Jesus saying these words: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence." (St. Matt. 11:12.)

2d Prel. Beg the grace of really understanding your own dispositions regarding your salvation.

POINT I

CONSIDERATION.—*He who has at heart an affair above all others — for example, a lawsuit on which his whole fortune depends — thinks of it at all times and in all places.* The thought pursues him in spite of himself, day and night; in his parties of pleasure, his conversations, his walks, his meals, his work. It is his first thought in the morning, his last at night; in one word, he is, as we say, entirely preoccupied with it.

APPLICATION.—Do you remark in yourself these signs of solicitude in regard to your salvation? Does the thought accompany you everywhere? Is it generally your first thought upon waking, your last thought before closing your eyes? If there is none of this, if generally your mind is occupied with vague, idle, earthly, or worldly thoughts, judge for yourself if you really have the business of your salvation more than any other at heart, and what there is for you to hope or to fear in eternity.

AFFECTIONS.—Astonishment and shame at finding that my thoughts are continually occupied with trifles, and rarely with the great affair of my salvation.

RESOLUTIONS.—To familiarize myself with the reflection which proved so useful to St. Aloysius Gonzaga: "*Quid hoc ad æternitatem?*" "What is this to eternity?"

POINT II

CONSIDERATION.— *He who has one affair above all others at heart is always afraid of its failure, that some accident should mar its success.* And the more important this affair is, the greater his uneasiness and his fears. This fact experience teaches us daily.

APPLICATION.— What affair is more important than that of your salvation? If, then, it causes you neither fear nor uneasiness, while so many others disturb you daily, it is a clear proof that you do not sufficiently appreciate the importance of your salvation, or that you are far from having it at heart beyond all other affairs. In this case, ought you not to conclude that you are living in a false security, and that you ought to fear the more because you do not fear enough? For he who is without fear of failure takes no serious means to attain success; and salvation is the reward of energy and striving; for, says Jesus Christ, “*Regnum cœlorum vim patitur, et violenti rapiunt illud.*” “The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away.” (St. Matt. 11: 12.)

AFFECTIONS.— I will ask with the holy King David, that I may not live in false security. “*Confige timore tuo carnes meas, ne unquam obdormiam in morte.*” “Pierce thou my flesh with thy fear, that I never sleep in death.” (Psalm 118: 120, and 12: 4.)

RESOLUTIONS.— I will endeavor to follow the counsel of the Holy Ghost: “*In timore Domini esto toto die, et habebis opem in novissimo.*” “Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long, because thou shalt have hope in the latter end.” (Prov. 23: 17, 18.)

POINT III

CONSIDERATION.— *He who has an affair at heart beyond all others never thinks he has done enough to*

assure its success. Look at that man implicated in a lawsuit which concerns his fortune — he is continually seeking new means of defending it. After one consultation, he has another; after one arrangement, he makes another. The aid of the most able lawyers scarcely suffices to give him courage. Every day, every hour, nay, every moment, so to say, that passes, seems to suggest to him some fresh expedient, some additional aid, some new resource, the most trivial of which will not be beneath his notice. He never thinks he has done enough. Is not this the case?

APPLICATION.— It would be the same with us, and with far more reason, if we had the business of our salvation and eternity seriously at heart. Far from imitating the lukewarm religious who confines himself in everything to what is strictly necessary, we should never think we have taken sufficient precautions or used sufficient means; never think we have done enough to obtain final perseverance, on which depends our eternal salvation. You will doubtless admit this practical conclusion; but does your conduct correspond to it? Seek in all sincerity for the answer to this question. The fruits of such an examination will be greater generosity in the service of God.

COLLOQUY with St. Aloysius Gonzaga. This youthful saint joined to an admirable innocence and fervor the most rigorous penance, fearing constantly to neglect anything which he ought or could do to secure his salvation. Beg of him to obtain for you the spirit of penance — for you who have perhaps frequently endangered your salvation by many and grievous sins. Do you remark this in yourself? What ought you to think about yourself?

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

1st Prel. See the Holy Family receiving the order to fly into Egypt.

2d Prel. Beg for the faith and resignation of which they give us the example.

POINT I

THE HOLY FAMILY RECEIVE THE ORDER TO FLY INTO EGYPT

CONSIDERATION.—"Ecce angelus Domini apparuit in somnis Joseph, dicens, Surge, et accipe puerum et matrem ejus, et fuge in Ægyptum." "An angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying, Arise, and take the Child and his Mother, and fly into Egypt." (St. Matt. 2: 13.)

Joseph and Mary, though poor, lived happily in the company of Jesus. They were without fear or distrust. However, "Herod, perceiving that he was deluded by the wise men," (St. Matt. 2: 16,) had taken his measures to destroy the Infant Jesus. But God watched over those to whose care he had been confided; He warned them of Herod's designs, and showed them the means of defeating them.

APPLICATION.—Let us learn by this to understand the providence of God over His servants. He does not promise to spare them afflictions and persecutions; but He promises to watch over them, to direct them by lawful superiors, and to act in such a manner that all things work together for their good. He knows how also, when it seems good to Him in times of great danger, to baffle the plots of the wicked. We see this in the history of the flight into Egypt, and in a number of facts recorded in the Bible and in the history of the Church.

AFFECTIONS.—Lively faith and boundless confidence in Divine Providence.

RESOLUTIONS.—In public calamities, as well as in those trials which affect me personally, I will endeavor to think and act in conformity with the immutable principles of faith.

POINT II

THE ORDER TO DEPART IS COMMUNICATED BY JOSEPH TO MARY

CONSIDERATION.—"An angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying, Fly into Egypt." Why did not the angel give the order to Mary, who was more holy and more dear to God than Joseph? Because he was the legal husband of Mary, and consequently the head of the Holy Family, and it is necessary to the maintenance of order that inferiors should be directed by superiors, even when the former excel the latter in holiness; for it is not to the worth of a man that we ought to trust the direction of our souls, but to God in the person of those who hold His place, and of whom He has said, "Qui vos audit, me audit." "He that heareth you heareth me." (St. Luke 10: 16.)

APPLICATION.—Am I always submissive to this doctrine and to this order established by God? Has it not happened sometimes that I have obeyed unwillingly, or failed in respect to a superior, because he was younger in age or in religion than I was, because he seemed to me to have less merit than I had? If it be so it is a certain proof that I do not understand the economy of the order established by God; that I have a very imperfect idea of the virtue of obedience, and that my acts of submission have been frequently rather acts of deference and policy than acts of supernatural virtue, which are alone worthy of recompense.

AFFECTIONS.—Promise invariable obedience to the order established by God.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will endeavor to see in my superiors the representatives of God, and I will consider them as such, apart from any faults to which they may be liable; for no human being is exempt from imperfection.

POINT III

REFLECTIONS ON THE ORDER THE ANGEL GAVE TO JOSEPH

CONSIDERATION.—“Fuge in Ægyptum, et esto ibi usque dum dicam tibi.” “Fly into Egypt, and be there until I shall tell thee.” (St. Matt. 2: 13.) Remark here how on one side the angel exacts from Joseph and Mary an act of blind obedience by concealing from them the length of their exile —“be there till I shall tell thee;” and then, on the other side, he explains the motives and the reasons why they are exiled; for “Futurum est enim ut Herodes quærat puerum ad perdendum eum.” “It will come to pass that Herod will seek the Child to destroy Him.” (Ibid.)

APPLICATION.—Thence let us conclude that superiors can give the motive of their orders or not; often discretion forbids them to give it. Sometimes it is better to say what it is, either to make the urgency or the way of performing the command better understood; or to condescend to the weakness and the imperfections of their inferiors, who, if they had an exact idea of the merit of obedience, should desire a simple command only. We see that this has ever been the wish of perfect religious. Let us follow them, and let us always aspire to the most perfect obedience.

COLLOQUY with the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph. Let us beg of them to obtain for us the grace to aspire constantly to the perfection of obedience, and to accept in the spirit of faith, with simplicity and absolute submission, all the decrees of Providence manifested to us through our superiors.

WONDERFUL OBEDIENCE

OF JOSEPH AND MARY

1st Prel. Imagine you see the Holy Family on their journey to Egypt.

2d Prel. Beg the grace of excelling in obedience.

POINT I

CONSIDERATION.— Joseph and Mary *obeyed blindly* with an entire and perfect submission of judgment. They did not ask why God did not arrest the arm of Herod rather than oblige them to go into exile; or if they must be exiled, why they should not go into the country of the Magi, who knew them so well, rather than to Egypt, whose inhabitants were hostile to the people of Israel; nor why the order to depart was not given to them soon enough to enable them to prepare for their journey. God spoke to them by His delegate; it was enough; they thought of nothing but obeying, persuaded that there is nothing better than to do *what God wills, because He wills it, as He wills it.*

APPLICATION.— Let us try to obey, like Mary and Joseph, not only courageously, but also blindly — that is, without wanting to know the *reason* of the command; for, in fact, if we execute a command after having asked for the reason of it, and because the thing seems right and useful, is it not true to say we are obeying our own ideas rather than the will of God, and that we no longer, strictly speaking, do what God wills, because He wills it, as He wills it — that therefore our obedience will lose much of its merit?

AFFECTIONS.— Let us confirm our faith and sustain our courage by saying with Jesus, on all occasions of difficulty, “*Ita Pater, quoniam sic fuit placitum ante*

te." "Yea, Father; for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight." (St. Matt. 11:26.)

RESOLUTIONS.—Always to distinguish clearly between the *principle* of religious obedience in general, which it may be useful to discuss, and the *act* of our own obedience.

POINT II

CONSIDERATION.—*They obeyed promptly*, without the slightest interval between the order and its execution. Joseph, says the Evangelist, rose at once, informed Mary of the command from heaven, and she, perfectly resigned, took the Child in her arms, and both set out that same night, without waiting for the dawn of day. "Qui consurgens accepit Puerum et Matrem ejus nocte, et secessit in Ægyptum." "Who arose, and took the Child and His Mother by night, and retired into Egypt." (St. Matt. 2:14.)

APPLICATION.—How far removed are we too often from this prompt obedience! How slowly and with what hesitation do we attend to the different community exercises! How unfaithful we are in obeying the first stroke of the bell — often for a vain excuse, commonly suggested by sensuality or caprice, in spite of a certain disquiet of conscience, or, what is worse, without any disquiet! Nevertheless, it may be the cause of great harm; especially when we have to watch over those who are confided to our care. If Joseph had not promptly obeyed the voice of the Angel, to what dangers would he not have exposed the sacred Charge which was confided to him!

AFFECTIONS.—Reflecting on the prompt and perfect obedience of Mary and Joseph, under such difficult circumstances, I will humble myself before God at the recollection of my numerous and grievous sins against that virtue, and will ask His pardon for them.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will henceforth obey with the

greatest promptitude, and even in the most trivial things.

POINT III

They obeyed generously, without uttering a word of murmur, without testifying regret or sorrow that duty called them so abruptly from their neighbors and friends, without showing the slightest trouble or disquietude about the future. Ah! it was because Jesus was all to them, and they knew that with Him they would surmount all difficulties, and that nothing would be wanting to them, and that no enemy could have power to injure them.

APPLICATION.— Let us always remember that in exchange for the sacrifice we have made of our will and liberty, God binds Himself to conduct us by our superiors to the end of our pilgrimage to our heavenly country. This thought will banish all fear, all hesitation; we shall obey generously, and be always victorious. Assured of the help of the Omnipotent, we shall cry out with the Apostle, when the idea of impossibility presents itself to us, “*Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.*” “I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me.” (Philipp. 4: 13.) Let us embrace these dispositions, and preserve them in our hearts.

COLLOQUY with the Angel who gave the Holy Family the order to fly into Egypt, and witnessed their wonderful obedience. Beg of him to obtain for us, not only grace, to understand clearly the lesson contained in the example given by Mary and Joseph on this occasion, but also courage to model our obedience on theirs.

ON THREE KINDS OF OBEDIENCE

1st Prel. Represent to yourself the Apostle saying these words,
 "Be obedient in the simplicity of your heart, as to Christ."
 (Ephes. 6: 5.)

2d Prel. Beg earnestly as the fruit of this Meditation the spirit
 of true obedience.

POINT I

SERVILE OBEDIENCE

CONSIDERATION.—*Servile* obedience, as the word indicates, proceeds from fear—not of God, but of men: fear of punishment, of reproach, of humiliation, or privation of some favor. It is the obedience of hirelings: while they are under their master's eye, they do what they are commanded, they conform to the rules he has laid down; but as soon as they are alone, they are unfaithful, and only follow their own humor. It is evident that in this there is neither the virtue nor merit of obedience, nothing but constraint and servility.

APPLICATION.—We are religious, we have made the vow of obedience of our own free choice; it would seem, then, that our obedience can have nothing in common with this low servility, this mockery of obedience. Nevertheless, let each from his heart ask himself, "When I am alone, and have no fear of being seen, am I as faithful to all that the rule and obedience has laid down as if I were under the eye of my superior? If the contrary frequently takes place, is it not an indication that servile fear has something, if not much, to do with the motive of my obedience?"

AFFECTIONS.—Repent in all humility of your past faults.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will often examine the motives which actuate me in the performance of my duties, and will endeavor to free them from all taint of servility or human respect.

POINT II

OBEDIENCE FROM POLICY

CONSIDERATION.— This second kind of obedience is founded on this maxim — it is always useful to be on good terms with superiors; it is a means of avoiding many disagreeable things and of obtaining little favors. This obedience, then, is entirely a human one; it has nothing more in common than the first with the *virtue* of obedience, it is simply selfishness. The world thinks it cleverness, but it is duplicity before God.

APPLICATION.— Have policy and duplicity never been mingled with your obedience? In your submission to your superiors, do you seek to please them for the sake of God, or for your own sake? Do you think of your superiors as you speak of them? Do you speak of them as you do to them? Do you blame them interiorly, or before some of your brethren, for what you have approved and praised before their face? By these signs, you can know the value of your obedience.

AFFECTIONS.— Humble yourself profoundly before God, reflecting on the great and many imperfections of which you have perhaps been guilty with regard to the practice of obedience, and ask forgiveness for them.

RESOLUTIONS.— Never to perform any action solely for creatures, not even with a view to pleasing your superiors, considered only as creatures. To avoid acting in any degree from motives of calculation or self-interest.

POINT III

SUPERNATURAL OBEDIENCE

CONSIDERATION.— This is the third kind of obedience, or rather it is the only one which deserves the name, the only true and meritorious obedience, the

only one pleasing to God and worthy of man. It is founded on faith, on that undeniable principle that God's will is to govern men by men whom He has appointed to be the guardians and visible representatives of His supreme authority, so that every man may live in that subjection which is due to his Sovereign Majesty. He who obeys on this principle does not, strictly speaking, obey men, his equals, but God in the person of man. He can say, "I recognize God only as above me; I submit only to God."

APPLICATION.—How great and how noble is the Christian and the religious who obeys in this way; and how pleasing to God and meritorious his obedience is, even in the smallest things! Renew the resolution to avoid carefully all that is contrary to this obedience, and thank God for having made you understand the greatness, the consolation, the merit of this obedience of faith and love.

COLLOQUY with your Guardian Angel, who being always in the presence of God, accomplishes His will in the most perfect manner: or with St. Timothy, whose Feast we celebrate this day. He was the faithful disciple of the Apostle St. Paul, by whom he was consecrated Bishop of Ephesus. Through perfect obedience to his great Master, he attained eminent sanctity, and won the crown of martyrdom.

RETURN

OF THE HOLY FAMILY FROM EGYPT

1st Prel. Look at the Holy Family traveling toward their native country.

2d Prel. Beg for an entire submission to the Will of Divine Providence.

POINT I

CONSTANCY OF JOSEPH

CONSIDERATION.—Joseph dwelt in Egypt with the Child Jesus and Mary *until the death of Herod*, (St. Matt. 2,) which took place four years after the massacre of the Innocents; but it is commonly believed that he did not receive the order to return from Egypt till three years later. This long sojourn in a strange country would, as it seems to us, have been extremely painful to Joseph and Mary, and have made them long eagerly for the moment of departure; but no, the single thought, “We are where God wishes us to be,” made the sojourn in Egypt not only endurable, but pleasant; on the other hand, the Gospel never hints that they were in want of what was necessary. Providence, then, provided for all their wants.

APPLICATION.—Let us learn by this to remain quietly on the spot and in the conditions in which we have been or may be placed by obedience, persuaded that it is God who directs us by our superiors. If it seems to us, at first sight, that we shall not absolutely know how to suit ourselves to our new position, let us promptly resist these first unfavorable impressions. A few days’ effort at self-conquest will subdue them. Let us firmly resist also all those ideas of changing our place or employment which are so frequent in our inconstant nature. How many religious, from not having followed these rules, have fallen victims to lamentable delusions, and even lost their vocation! “*Imaginato et locorum mutatio multos fefellit.*” “The im-

agination and changing of places has deceived many," says the *Imitation*. (I. Book, ix.)

AFFECTIONS.—"Do with me, Lord, as Thou wilt, because I know that Thou dost love me." (St. Augustine.)

RESOLUTIONS.—Wherever I may be placed, I will devote myself altogether to the performance of the duties allotted to me, avoiding all anxiety for the future. I will, when necessary, renew my courage by this reflection: I am where God wills me to be; I am doing what He wills that I should do.

POINT II

RESIGNATION OF JOSEPH

CONSIDERATION.—An Angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Take the Child and His Mother, and go into the land of Israel." We may suppose (and many of the Fathers assure us of it) that God disposed some hearts in Egypt toward Joseph, so that he could practice his trade, and that he became at length used to his new position, and contented with it. It would then have been likely that he would regret sorely having to quit it, and undertake a long journey, without exactly knowing where he could take up his abode; nevertheless, he left all at the first injunction of the Angel, without hesitation or anxiety for the future.

APPLICATION.—It will probably cause you suffering some day when you have to leave a house, an office, or brethren with whom you have lived a long while. Besides, at a certain age, every change of our dwelling, even of our room, of office, or of superior, is trying to nature, and often becomes the occasion of a most painful sacrifice; if this sacrifice is demanded from you, make it heartily. Your generous obedience will have a great recompense, as had that of St. Joseph.

AFFECTIONS.—My Lord and my God! I wish to abandon myself altogether and for all time to the decrees of Thy merciful and gracious Providence.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will accustom myself generously to conquer all natural feelings of repugnance, and I will endeavor particularly to do so now, when the effort will cost me less, in order to continue the practice at a more advanced age and under circumstances of greater difficulty.

POINT III

PRUDENCE OF JOSEPH

CONSIDERATION.—"But hearing that Archelaus reigned in Judea in the room of Herod his father, he was afraid to go thither." (St. Matt. 2:22.) It seemed to him that the Child Jesus would not be safe in the dominions of a prince who was son and successor of Herod, and like him in cruelty; besides, the *land of Israel* which the Angel named had various provinces, governed by different princes. But to which of these territories should he give the preference? Where would he be most secure? He wanted the light of grace; he sought and found it in prayer. "Et veniens habitavit in civitate quæ vocatur Nazareth." "Being warned in sleep, he retired into the quarters of Galilee, and coming, he dwelt in a city called Nazareth." (St. Matt. 2:22, 23.)

APPLICATION.—The conduct of Joseph in this circumstance teaches us to act with deliberation in everything; in all our doubts and perplexities, after having reflected well, we should, before acting, have recourse to humble and fervent prayer. What troubles of conscience and what useless regrets we should spare ourselves by constantly following these rules of conduct!

COLLOQUY with St. Joseph, or with St. Paul, whose conversion we celebrate to-day.

THE HOLY FAMILY GO UP TO THE TEMPLE

AT JERUSALEM

1st Prel. See the Holy Family prostrate before God in the Temple.

2d Prel. Beg. for a lively faith and an ardent piety, in presence of Jesus Christ concealed in our tabernacles.

POINT I

JOSEPH GOES TO KEEP THE PASCH AT JERUSALEM

CONSIDERATION.—“Et ibant parentes ejus per omnes annos in Jerusalem in die solemni Pascha.” “And His parents went every year to Jerusalem at the solemn day of the Pasch,” to adore God in His Temple. (St. Luke 2:41.) That the Israelites, so inclined to idolatry, might be always kept in mind of the unity of God and the worship due to Him, they were only permitted to build one Temple—the Temple of Jerusalem. The law obliged all men, and boys come to a certain age, to go there three times a year, at the feasts of the Pasch, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. (Deut. 16:16.) This was not much in itself, but considering the long and difficult journey so many had to make, it was a good deal; and pious men like Joseph felt keenly not being able to go oftener to satisfy their devotion.

APPLICATION.—Far happier than the Israelites, we have everywhere churches and oratories dedicated to our Lord, where He dwells not only in spirit as in the Temple, but in Person, though hidden from our eyes. We have only a few steps to take before we can enter them. He invites us tenderly to come to Him; anxious to pour His favors on us. How do we respond to His invitation? How many times a day do we go to visit Him, to lay before Him our homage and our supplications? Occasions of doing it come so often as if of

themselves. Do we not neglect them, even perhaps when an interior voice bids us profit by them?

AFFECTIONS.—Dwell with spiritual joy on these words of Jesus, “Come to me,” and also on the following: “My delight is to be with the children of men.” (Prov. 8: 31.)

RESOLUTIONS.—To make it our constant practice to visit the Blessed Sacrament; not only when obliged by rule, but at other times.

POINT II

MARY ACCOMPANIES JOSEPH

CONSIDERATION.—“And His parents went every year to Jerusalem at the solemn day of the Pasch.” We see, by these words of the Evangelist, that Mary went also to fulfill the Paschal duty at Jerusalem, although the law did not oblige women to do so. She never asked what was of strict obligation, but what was most likely to promote the glory of God, her own sanctification, and the edification of her neighbor.

APPLICATION.—This conduct of Mary ought to be the invariable rule of every true religious. It is the constant teaching of all the masters of spiritual life, that to make progress in the ways of perfection, we must add that which is of supererogation to that which is of obligation, not only in matters of piety, but in mortification, charity, zeal, and all other virtues. Have I followed this rule? Have I not, on the contrary, confined myself to what is of strict obligation, and thus deprived myself, by being illiberal toward God, of the gifts of His bounty? The danger of such conduct is, that we run the risk of often being unfaithful to what is of obligation.

AFFECTIONS.—Praise and magnify the Lord for His generosity toward you. Ask forgiveness for having so badly corresponded with His graces.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will consider in what and how I can to-day show my generosity toward God.

POINT III

JESUS, WHEN TWELVE YEARS OF AGE, ACCOMPANIES MARY AND JOSEPH

CONSIDERATION.— Let us follow in spirit the Holy Family in their pilgrimage to Jerusalem. What eager love directed their steps! With what religious delight they ascended the steps of the Temple! In what grave and respectful attitudes they placed themselves! Sometimes they were prostrate, sometimes they knelt, or stood with their eyes raised to heaven. Let us penetrate into their souls, and try to gain an idea of the ardent devotion with which they gave glory to God, thanked Him for His blessings, offered themselves as victims of expiation for the sins of the world, and begged for an abundance of Divine benedictions on the people of Israel and on all men.

APPLICATION.— What beautiful models are here before our eyes, both as to our exterior manner and as to the affections we ought to nourish in our hearts each time that we appear before God in His Temple, especially during the Holy Sacrifice! How have I copied this model?

COLLOQUY with the Angels who beheld with delight the example of piety given to the world by the Holy Family. Ask them to inspire you with the recollection of it during Meditation, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and all religious exercises.

JESUS LOST, AND FOUND AGAIN

BY MARY IN THE TEMPLE

1st Prel. I will represent to myself Mary and Joseph seeking the Child Jesus.

2d Prel. I will beg the grace of living always in a close union with Jesus.

POINT I

JESUS REMAINS AT JERUSALEM UNKNOWN TO HIS PARENTS

CONSIDERATION.—The Gospel story proposed for our meditation to-day is full not only of mystery, but of great instruction, for it has pleased the Incarnate Word, says Pope St. Gregory, to teach us by His actions no less than by His words—*Ipsa facta Verbi verba sunt*.

By remaining unknown to His parents in Jerusalem, in spite of the suffering that they would feel and which He felt Himself, He wished to teach men to put the interests of God's glory above natural affections, even the most lawful ones; He wished especially to teach religious that they should die entirely to the affections of flesh and blood, by changing the natural attachment to their relatives and friends into a spiritual one.

APPLICATION.—To change filial affection into a spiritual love, is not to destroy but to perfect it; in a certain sense, to make it divine. Have I always understood and practiced this doctrine? In consequence of not understanding it well, or, rather, not practicing it well, many religious have become the victims of fatal delusions, and have at last lost their vocation.

AFFECTIONS.—Let us thank God that we have not been the victims of such delusions; and beg the grace to be continually preserved from them.

RESOLUTIONS.—In all temptations arising from inordinate affection for relatives or friends, I will reflect on these words of our Lord: "He that loveth father

or mother more than me is not worthy of me." (St. Matt. 10 : 37.)

POINT II

HIS DISCONSOLATE PARENTS SEEK HIM FOR THREE DAYS

CONSIDERATION.—“ And having fulfilled the days,” says St. Luke, “ when they returned with a number of friends and inhabitants of Nazareth, the Child Jesus remained in Jerusalem, and His parents knew it not. And thinking He was in the company, they came a day’s journey, and sought Him among their kinsfolks and acquaintance, and not finding Him, they returned into Jerusalem seeking Him.” (St. Luke 2 : 43, 44, 45.) Mary and Joseph loved Jesus with their whole hearts; He was all in all to them, He was the life of their life. When they lost His sweet presence, the world became a melancholy desert to them. How great, then, must have been their sorrow and their agony! Who can form an idea of it?

APPLICATION.— Why is it that when you have lost Jesus by sin, you are so little touched and afflicted? Is it not because you love Him so feebly, because He is far from being all to you? Further, in the language of the Saints, *to lose Jesus* is not only to be separated from Him by mortal sin, and to be less united to Him by affection to venial sin, but also to be deprived of the sweetness and consolation of his sensible presence. We can *lose Jesus* in this third manner, without its being our fault. The sighs and tears of God’s greatest servants show us this. “ Nevertheless,” says the author of the *Imitation*, (I. Book, xxi,) “ it is often our own fault; we are unmortified and dissipated, and tepid in God’s service.”

AFFECTIONS.— Acknowledge yourself unworthy of Divine consolations; but ask with humility that you may not be altogether deprived of them.

RESOLUTIONS.— To die to the world and to our-

selves, in order that Christ may live in us, and we in Him.

POINT III

THEY FIND HIM AGAIN IN THE TEMPLE

CONSIDERATION.—After three days' search, they found Him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing and answering them. His mother, drawing Him aside, said to Him, "Son, why hast Thou done so to us? Behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing." He answered her, "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" (St. Luke 2:48, 49.)

APPLICATION.—Mary and Joseph teach us never to rest till we have found Jesus again, when we have lost Him by one of the three ways indicated in the preceding point. Have we done this? Jesus teaches us on His side to let all considerations about parents and families give way to the service of God, to whom we ought to devote ourselves entirely and before all things. Have we constantly followed this rule of conduct?

COLLOQUY with the zealous and illustrious St. John Chrysostom, whose Feast we keep to-day.

JESUS LEAVES JERUSALEM

AND GOES DOWN TO NAZARETH

1st Prel. See the Child Jesus walking between Mary and Joseph.

2d Prel. Beg the esteem and love of retreat and modesty.

POINT I

JESUS LEAVES THE CITY OF JERUSALEM

CONSIDERATION.—Jesus, aged twelve years, had given in the Temple, even to the doctors of the law, a striking proof of His Divine wisdom. “All that heard Him were astonished at His wisdom and His answers.” (St. Luke 2:47.) We should imagine that this favorable beginning would have induced Him to commence the course of His preaching; nevertheless, He did nothing, but resigned Himself to His parents’ care, as is natural for children of His age. “He went down with them”—*descendit cum eis* (Ibid.)—and came far away, to bury Himself at Nazareth in a kind of solitude. He did not leave it till long afterward, when the moment fixed by the good pleasure of His Heavenly Father arrived; restraining in Himself the zeal that would have made Him hasten to the rescue of souls.

APPLICATION.—Let us remember the reflection we have made, that the actions of Jesus are instructions. What does He teach us now? 1. That before coming forward and professing to teach others, we should teach ourselves in silence and retreat, virtue and knowledge, especially the knowledge of sanctity. This is the end of the novitiate of all religious orders. 2. That we ought not to be eager or even desirous to leave this retreat till we are called from it by our superiors. 3. When we are called to the active life, placed in a house or a fixed employment, we ought not to mingle in the noise and conversations of the world more than is

necessary, persuaded that we shall be nowhere so secure or so happy as in our cell alone with God. What have been our feelings and our conduct on this point?

AFFECTIONS.— Why, O Lord! have I not invariably acted in conformity with the teaching of Thy Divine Son? How many errors and difficulties should I thus have been spared!

RESOLUTIONS.— To shun useless walks and conversations, both in the house and out of it.

POINT II

JESUS RETURNING TO GALILEE

CONSIDERATION.— We contemplated, the day before yesterday, to our great edification, the Holy Family prostrate in prayer in the Temple. Let us contemplate them now on the journey from Jerusalem to Galilee; we shall find there fresh matter for edification. Let us fix our eyes at first on Mary and Joseph, having the Child Jesus between them. What gravity, what religious modesty in their walk and in their whole appearance! In the movements of the head and eyes, we see none of that curiosity and levity which are so natural to us, and often so hurtful. Let us listen to the conversation which sometimes interrupts their silence and prayer. It runs upon the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, on the great things that Jesus would perform in the world for the glory of God. The answer given by the Child Jesus to His mother, "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" leads us to suppose this. If it were given to us to look into their souls, we should see them occupied with pious affections and meditations. The Gospel proves this by saying of our Lady especially, "And His mother kept all these words in her heart." (St. Luke 2: 51.)

APPLICATION.—To draw fruit from this meditation, let us see what there is in common or in contrast between the Holy Family and us, when alone or in company, when we are out of the house, walking or traveling. This comparison will make us see in what we have failed, and in what we ought to reform.

AFFECTIONS.—An ardent desire to follow the counsel of the Apostle: "Let your modesty be known to all men." (Philipp. 4: 5.)

RESOLUTIONS.—Always, on returning to the house, to make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and a short examination on the time we may have spent abroad.

POINT III

JESUS DWELLS AT NAZARETH

CONSIDERATION.—The Son of God, who had chosen the vilest place, in the opinion of man, for that of His birth, a deserted stable, chose for His abode, during nearly thirty years in the land of Israel, the little town of Nazareth, of which the proverb ran, "A Nazareth potest quid boni esse?" "Can any thing of good come from Nazareth?" (St. John 1: 46.)

APPLICATION.—Why did Jesus Christ act thus? Doubtless to confound our vanity, which makes us desire and seek a dwelling in great centers of population, apparently to do a great work, but in reality to be put more forward, more appreciated, praised, and applauded. Look into the depths of your own heart, does it not tell you there is some truth in this? And if it be thus, what matter of confusion for you! Jesus, who is infinite wisdom, flies from admiration, notice, and applause, and you seek after them. Are you not injuring yourself, doing yourself immense harm, by losing in great part the merit of your good works?

COLLOQUY with the guardian angels of the Holy Family.

ON THE MYSTERY OF THE HIDDEN LIFE OF JESUS

1st Prel. Represent to yourself the little house of Nazareth where the Holy Family lived.

2d Prel. Beg the grace of understanding well the great mystery of the hidden life of Jesus.

POINT I

THE MYSTERY OF THE HIDDEN LIFE OF JESUS

CONSIDERATION.—Jesus came into the world not only to give life to the human race by His death, but also to bring it by His Divine teaching to the knowledge of the truth, to the worship and love of the true God. He had to convert the world; and to accomplish this immense work, He had only thirty-three years before Him. It would seem, therefore, that He had no time to lose; we should expect to see Him as soon as possible come before men, as sent by God and the teacher of the human race. But no — and here is the mystery — until thirty years of age, He remained unknown to the entire world, living in the obscure workshop of a carpenter!

APPLICATION.—When, in contemplation, we place ourselves in spirit before the obscure retreat of the Divine Saviour, we are tempted to say with His disciples, “*Manifesta te ipsum mundo.*” “Manifest Thyself to the world.” (St. John 7:4.) Lord, undeceive the world, it is lost: while here, Thou dost nothing to save it, and Thou art losing time, which is so precious. And Jesus answers us, “*Sine intellectu estis?*” “Are you also yet without understanding?” (St. Matt. 15:16.) You say that I do nothing. I do the will of My Father; be it known to you that it alone is great and praiseworthy. You say that I lose time; and I teach men — those especially who will hereafter aspire to perfection — to subdue their pride, to live without

complaint or murmur, unknown and despised by the world, in an obscure spot, if obedience demands it of them. Who can, after this, complain that he is not placed or employed according to his merit and his talents?

AFFECTIONS.— I will ask pardon of our Lord for having spoken so rashly. I will adore the mystery of His hidden life. I will ask the grace to renounce and despise myself, and all that is not God, or that does not lead me to Him.

RESOLUTIONS.— If compelled by age or infirmity to remain confined to my room, to be after a manner no longer of this world, I will think on Jesus dwelling in the humble house of Nazareth. I will console myself with the reflection that, although separated from the world, we may still co-operate with our Lord in laboring for the salvation of souls by prayer, patience, and resignation in suffering.

POINT II

MEANING OF THIS MYSTERY

CONSIDERATION.— To have a more complete knowledge of the hidden life of Jesus, the end that He had in leading it, and all the gratitude we owe Him, let us recollect that the miseries of the world, which the Saviour came to remedy, sprang from pride; that it is still the permanent cause which threatens to bring back the same disorders. He had especially to make men understand and adopt the only remedy for pride — *humility*. This is the tendency of the first lessons He gave to the world: "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart." (St. Matt. 11: 29.) "Blessed are the poor in spirit." (St. Matt. 5: 3.) "Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled." (St. Matt. 23: 12.) "And many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first." (St. Matt. 19: 30.)

Before all things, He preached humility; He proclaimed its absolute necessity. But if He had contented Himself with preaching it, without practicing and teaching it in a striking manner by His example, we should have understood the lesson; but our pride, so deeply rooted in our souls, would have resisted; it would have said, "Jesus in truth has eloquently preached humility, self-forgetfulness, the contempt of the world and of its disdain: but He has been Himself highly thought of, constantly admired, praised, and applauded." The lessons and the exhortations of the Saviour would have been useless; pride and the disorders that spring from it would have been triumphant.

APPLICATION.—There is no one who does not feel the truth of this conclusion, however little he may know himself. If he looks into the depths of his heart, he ought to say to himself, "If now, even when I have Jesus before my eyes placed so low, and as it were annihilated in the opinion of men, it costs me so much to conquer my pride, not to be troubled or to complain when others are preferred to me, when I am withdrawn from some office of honor, or employed in some inferior or humiliating one, what would it be if this Divine model had not been given to me? How should I ever have subdued my pride, or loved and practiced humility?"

COLLOQUY with Jesus hidden and unknown at Nazareth. Adore Him. Thank Him for having enabled us to comprehend the great and encouraging lesson which He gives us from His obscure retreat at Nazareth. Ask pardon of Him for having profited so little by this lesson. Offer Him your good resolutions. Beg grace to be faithful to them.

NATURE, MOTIVES, AND PRACTICE

OF A PURE INTENTION

1st Prel. I will imagine that I hear St. Paul say, "Do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. 10:31.)

2d Prel. I will beg from God help to acquire the habit of always acting with a pure intention.

POINT I

NATURE OF A PURE INTENTION

CONSIDERATION.—Our state of life very much resembles that of Jesus in the house of Nazareth. The greater part of our days is passed within a cloister. We lead there a life hidden from the world. How can we, how ought we to sanctify it? Especially by a pure intention, which enhances our smallest actions in the eyes of God. Let us try to understand well the *nature*, the *motives*, and the *practice* of this pure intention. Intention is an act of the will by which man tends toward an end. If this end is good, the intention is so also; but that it may be meritorious before God, it must have a supernatural end; and he who possesses it must be in a state of grace. We may have at one time many supernatural ends, either directly or indirectly regarding God. By one single action, then, we can amass a great variety of merits.

APPLICATION.—Every reasonable man is supposed to act for some determined end; but there are a great number who take no account of their intentions, who act habitually from purely natural or idle intentions. What a loss of merit, which is forever irreparable! Do you belong to this category of Christians or religious so little mindful of their eternal interests?

AFFECTIONS.—Teach me, O Lord Jesus! from the example of the thirty years of Thy hidden life, to ren-

der myself pleasing in the sight of God by a pure and upright intention in all my actions.

RESOLUTIONS.— To watch over myself in order that all my actions may be sanctified by a good intention.

POINT II

MOTIVES OF A PURE INTENTION

CONSIDERATION.— Many motives lead us and urge us always to act with a pure intention, and attentively to watch over ourselves that it may be so; the first is, that nothing is more important. On our intentions depends in great measure the value of our actions before God, and consequently the value of time, which must decide our eternity; because time is only a succession of actions which make up our short life in this world. The second motive is, that nothing is more just. We belong entirely to God, and consequently we ought by a pure intention to devote all to Him, even the most indifferent actions; as says the Apostle, "*Sive manducatis, sive bibitis, sive aliud quid facitis, omnia in gloriam Dei facite.*" "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God." (1. Cor. 10:31.) The third motive is that nothing is more easy than what the practice of a pure intention supposes, as we shall show in the following point.

APPLICATION.— Take these motives into serious consideration, weigh the value of each, and doubtless you will feel a desire spring up in your heart of attaining the practical perfection of all that a pure intention denotes, especially as, in the state of grace which religious life makes so easy, you ought not to meet with any serious difficulty in its execution.

AFFECTIONS.— Joy and gratitude that we have been called to a state of life which offers every facility for

living in the friendship of God, and in which all reminds us of His presence and His love.

RESOLUTIONS.—To make from time to time the *particular examination* on the practice of purity of intention.

POINT III

PRACTICE OF A PURE INTENTION

CONSIDERATION.—All consists of two things, of which we ought to try to acquire the habit: first, to make for one's self or to take from others a settled form containing many intentions, which we will repeat every morning with great intensity of will; then renew it often throughout the day, for fear it should have been spoilt or destroyed by vainglory or self-love.

APPLICATION.—Look into yourself; see where you are as regards these two practical points. Have you preserved intact the habit of repeating every morning the form so rich in pure intentions, which you were taught in the novitiate? Have you the habit of renewing it often during the day? How often do you renew it? Do you make use of any means to recall it, if necessary, to your memory?

COLLOQUY with St. Aloysius Gonzaga, who, in the space of a few years, gained an extraordinary degree of merit through the practice of sanctifying even his most trivial actions by great purity of intention, the fruit of his intimate union with God. Let us pray to Him, and beg, through His intercession, the grace to imitate His virtues.

JESUS A MODEL OF OBEDIENCE IN HIS HIDDEN LIFE

1st Prel. See the Child Jesus obeying Mary and Joseph with perfect grace.

2d Prel. Beg for the knowledge, esteem, and practical love of the obedience of faith.

POINT I

QUALITIES OF THE OBEDIENCE OF JESUS

CONSIDERATION.—“*Erat subditus illis,*” “He was subject to them.” (St. Luke 2: 51.) In these three words, the Holy Ghost has chosen that the history of our Saviour’s life till his thirtieth year should be contained and transmitted to future ages. He seemed to reduce all to obedience. Because obedience is the only solid proof of the humility that Jesus, by the mystery of His hidden life, wished, before all things, to teach man: without humility, we can not please God; without obedience, we can not flatter ourselves that we are humble. But what ought our obedience to be? Jesus has chosen to be the living model of it. Let us attentively study this model. He *was subject to them.* *Who?* The God of heaven and earth, who made man. *To whom?* To Mary and to Joseph, two eminently holy creatures certainly, but nevertheless simple creatures, the work of His hands. *In what?* In all things—there is no mention of any exception. And *how* did He obey? Promptly, entirely, constantly, lovingly, and with perfect grace.

APPLICATION.—Imagine you hear Jesus saying to you, “I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also,” (St. John 13: 15;) and, looking back, see if your obedience has been habitually modeled on that of your Divine Master; if it has the same qualities; if it gives joy and happiness to your

superiors, as that of Jesus made the joy and happiness of Mary and Joseph.

AFFECTIONS.—Admiration, gratitude, an ardent desire to imitate more closely the example given us by our Divine Model.

RESOLUTIONS.—I wish to apply myself with great energy to correct all that I now perceive to be faulty in my practice of obedience.

POINT II

PRINCIPLE OF THE OBEDIENCE OF JESUS

CONSIDERATION.—The exterior actions of men spring from some interior principle or determined motive. What was the principle of the beautiful and perfect obedience of the Child Jesus? Fear? Certainly not. Interest or hope of reward? Again, no. What had the Ruler of the Universe to fear or hope from men? What, then, was the principle of it? No other than the will of God His Father manifested through His representatives Mary and Joseph. Is not this what is meant by the words so familiar to our Saviour?—"Ita, Pater, quoniam sic placitum est coram te"—"Yea, Father, for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight," (St. Matt. 11:26,) "to give me Mary for a mother and Joseph for my adopted father." "Fiat voluntas tua"—"Thy will be done." I will be obedient to them in all things, as to Thee, for love of Thee. Properly speaking, then, Jesus did not obey creatures, Mary and Joseph, but God His Father, in the persons of Mary and Joseph.

APPLICATION.—Here is the idea of supernatural obedience—the obedience of faith, springing from this principle of faith; that the invisible God wills to be represented by a visible representative; that He wills to govern men by other men invested with His authority, and of whom it is written, "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me."

(St. Luke 10: 16.) To obey from this principle is great, noble, and meritorious; it is to be amenable only to God in the person of superiors. Can we flatter ourselves we have thus habitually obeyed? Have we not obeyed sometimes, perhaps often, from purely human and natural motives, which are consequently without dignity or great merit before God?

AFFECTIONS.—Let us thank God that it has been given to us to understand the virtue of true obedience. Let us beg the grace to excel in the spirit and constant practice of this noble and holy obligation.

RESOLUTIONS.—To examine frequently the principle and motives of our obedience.

POINT III

MERIT OF THE OBEDIENCE OF JESUS

CONSIDERATION.—By this perfect obedience, the Child Jesus, from His tenderest years, enhanced the merit of His smallest actions in the eyes of His Father; and as time is only the uninterrupted series of interior and exterior acts, what an immense treasure of merit did not Jesus as man acquire for us during the thirty years of His hidden life!

APPLICATION.—We have come into religion to enrich ourselves with merits for eternal life. Let us try to excel in the virtue of obedience, and we shall obtain our desire; while leading a common life, hidden from the eyes of the world, we shall heap up immense treasures for heaven, even if we had not besides, the occasion of performing notable acts of zeal, penitence, and charity.

COLLOQUY with Jesus, the grand Model of obedience. The subject may be taken from the Affections and Resolutions of the first and second Points.

MODESTY, GENTLENESS, AND PIETY OF JESUS

IN HIS HIDDEN LIFE

1st Prel. I will imagine that I hear Jesus Christ saying, "I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also."

2d Prel. I will beg for an ardent desire of reproducing in myself especially the *gentleness*, the *modesty*, and the *piety* of Jesus.

POINT I

GENTLENESS OF JESUS

CONSIDERATION.— Jesus did not content Himself by being a perfect model of obedience in His hidden life; He gave us also the example of many other virtues which the religious should endeavor to acquire in the retirement of the cloister before he enters upon the apostolic career. The Holy Ghost makes special mention of three: gentleness, modesty, and piety. "I beseech you," says the Apostle, "by the mildness and modesty of Christ," (2 Cor. 10: 1;) and Isaias, speaking of the promised Messiah, said the spirit of godliness, or piety, should rest on Him. (Isa. 11.) It is of importance, then, for us to study the character of these virtues, so that we may adopt and excel in them. "Gentleness," says St. Thomas of Aquin, "is the virtue of a noble soul. Those who possess it rise above all injuries; and even at the moment when they are attacked, they remain tranquil — they do not lose their peace of heart." (*Tract. de Virt.*)

APPLICATION.— Do you find the mark of Christian gentleness in yourself? rather, does it not often happen that you give way to disquiet, impatience, irritation, anger, or studied coldness toward your brethren for frivolous reasons, even for the mere suspicion that they

despise you? If this be so, humble yourself, repent, and amend.

AFFECTIONS.— Assist me, O Lord Jesus! to become of the number of those of whom Thou didst say, “Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” (St. Matt. 5: 4, 9.)

RESOLUTIONS.— To imitate those of your religious brethren who are most remarkable for gentleness and amiability.

POINT II

MODESTY OF JESUS

CONSIDERATION.— The *modesty*, which the Apostle mentions in common with gentleness, has a charm and an attraction for the hearts of others, and besides, it gives great edification and adds much luster to all the other virtues. The modesty of Jesus as a child, of Jesus in His youth, was more than angelic, it was divine. How wonderful and charming was His modesty in His looks, His words, His walk, in every movement of His body, in all His intercourse with others, in the simplicity and uniformity of his exterior life! “He shall not be sad or troublesome,” says the prophet Isaias. (Isa. 42: 4.)

APPLICATION.— See how far you resemble this living example of modesty. Do your words breathe humility, self-forgetfulness, reserve, discretion, a desire to edify your neighbor, to glorify God? Or do they not rather breathe vanity, boasting, presumption, and levity? In your looks, in your walk, in your way of behavior, out of the house or in the house, is the religious seen, modest and dead to himself, or a worldly and vain man, seeking himself in all things?

AFFECTIONS.— Let us ardently desire that these words of the Apostle may be accomplished in us:

"Let your modesty be known to all men." (Philipp. 4: 5.)

RESOLUTIONS.— Frequently to make the *particular examination* on the rules of modesty.

POINT III

PIETY OF JESUS

CONSIDERATION.— Filial piety, that feeling of tenderness and devotion which is natural in the heart of the child for his father, is the third special virtue attributed by the Holy Ghost to Jesus living in His retreat at Nazareth. "The spirit of piety shall rest upon him." (Isa. 11: 2.) Jesus had no need, as we have, to unite Himself with God His Father by prayer and contemplation, and yet how diligent He was in prayer! Certainly, if, in His active life, He spent whole nights in it—"Erat pernoctans in oratione Dei," (St. Luke 6: 12,) — we should believe that He devoted to it the greater part of His time in His hidden life.

APPLICATION.— For us who are not able to see God our Father, it is only by raising ourselves in spirit to Him by prayer, contemplation, and other religious exercises, that we can know Him, and awaken within us the sweet and noble sentiments of filial piety. We ought, therefore, to have a great esteem for pious exercises, and be diligent in them. Is it thus with us?

COLLOQUY with the admirable St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, and Martyr, whose Feast is celebrated this day — to ask him to intercede for us, and to obtain for us particularly what we need in the practice of meekness, modesty, and piety.

FEAST OF THE PURIFICATION

OR CANDLEMAS-DAY

1st Prel. Look at Mary in the Temple offering the Infant Jesus to the Lord, and Jesus offering Himself by the hands of Mary.
2d Prel. Ask for the spirit of generosity and sacrifice.

POINT I

WHAT DID MARY DO FOR US ON THIS DAY?

CONSIDERATION.— Mary has given us a wonderful example of humility and obedience by submitting, without any obligation, to the law of purification, and thus being willing to pass in public opinion for an ordinary and sinful woman. But what gives her still greater claims to our admiration and love is, that she made to-day the most heroic sacrifice imaginable, by offering to God the Father the only object of her love — her Jesus — to be the victim of expiation for our sins, the price of our redemption. She did, in truth, like other mothers, pay five shekels for the ransom of her Divine Child, and He was given back to her; but it was only that she might nourish Him and watch over him, as a victim that is reared for sacrifice.

APPLICATION.— What a sight is here before our eyes! The love of God's glory and the salvation of souls triumphing in Mary over maternal love and tenderness! Alas! how far are we from such abnegation, from such fervent love of God and of our neighbor! We who care more for our own interests than those of God's glory and the souls committed to our care — we who avoid the execution of our duties, or some little sacrifices, by a thousand excuses; let us try to forget ourselves, to rise once for all above ourselves, and to become more worthy of our Mother.

AFFECTIONS.— Beg earnestly of Mary to obtain for you the spirit of generosity and self-sacrifice.

RESOLUTIONS.— To impose on yourself this day, in imitation of Mary, some sacrifice painful to nature, but pleasing to God.

POINT II

WHAT DID JESUS DO FOR US THIS DAY?

CONSIDERATION.— A little child of six weeks old, but possessing the perfect use of reason, Jesus offered Himself, by the hands of Mary, to His Heavenly Father to be the ransom of the human race, which was groaning under the yoke of the devil; to be the victim of expiation for the injury done by sin to the Divine Majesty; to be finally, by the shedding of His blood, the victim of universal expiation. God the Father accepted this offering, the only one worthy of Him; and from that day Jesus began that long martyrdom of thirty-three years, which ended only with His last sigh on the Cross.

APPLICATION.— From the cradle to the tomb, the life of your Divine Saviour and Model was nothing less than a continual immolation of Himself for the glory of His Heavenly Father and the sanctification of souls; it was a life of sacrifice, and ended by the sacrifice of Himself. Here is the *ideal* of a true religious, who by the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and by the solemn engagement of laboring for the salvation of his neighbor, offers and immolates himself entirely on the altar of the love of God. Are you approaching, or at least are you trying to approach, this ideal of religious perfection?

AFFECTIONS.— A generous desire to attain this high degree of perfection.

RESOLUTIONS.— Offer to Jesus in Holy Communion this day some generous resolutions on this point.

POINT III

WHAT OUGHT WE TO DO FOR JESUS AND MARY ON
THIS DAY?

CONSIDERATION.—We ought to respond as far as we can to the love which Jesus and Mary have shown us. We also ought to go to the Temple and present ourselves to the Lord; and while the candles are blessed and offered, we should offer ourselves without reserve on the altar of sacrifice which was raised by the hands of Jesus and Mary, desiring to be there consumed by the holy fire of Divine love.

APPLICATION.—Every memory belonging to this feast should contribute to reanimate our fervor, to give us fresh earnestness in God's service, and in the execution of our duties and the sacrifices which zeal for souls demands from us.

We have now entered on another month, the second month of the year; let us try to improve upon what we have done well in the first month, or at least to make up for what we have neglected.

COLLOQUY with the Holy Virgin. Thank her for all she has done for us on this day. Beg of her to offer us to our Heavenly Father in union with the Child Jesus, and to assist us in accomplishing the good resolutions made during this meditation.

ON THESE WORDS,

**"JESUS ADVANCED IN WISDOM AND AGE, AND GRACE
WITH GOD AND MEN." (ST. LUKE 2:52.)**

1st Prel. Look at the three persons of the Holy Family in the little dwelling of Nazareth.

2d Prel. Beg the grace of feeling an ardent desire of making progress in the practice of perfection.

POINT I

JESUS ADVANCED IN WISDOM BEFORE MEN

CONSIDERATION.—"Jesus advanced in wisdom;" meaning that, as He grew up, He allowed a greater wisdom, a greater perfection to manifest itself in His whole conduct, so that, in the eyes of those who were observing Him, He appeared to progress like other men, whose intellectual development depends on age and experience; while in Jesus, says the Apostle *were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge* from the moment of His Incarnation. He advanced, then, by constant progress in perfection and sweetness, edifying and delighting more and more all those who saw Him.

APPLICATION.—How enviable is the lot of those religious who, following the steps of their Divine Model, ardently desire, and happily obtain, the grace of becoming better as they advance in age! They console their superiors, they edify their brethren, they rejoice the Heart of Jesus, they prove that they are fulfilling their first duty of tending toward perfection. Am I in the number of those who thus follow the steps of Jesus Christ? Do I not rather belong to the category of those who consume themselves in mere desires, who remain stationary, or rather fall back instead of advancing?

AFFECTIONS.—These will be suggested by a serious

examination on the above point, and will depend on the testimony of your own conscience with regard to your present state.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will consider the incessant pains bestowed by men upon the advancement of their temporal interests, and will, after their example, make every effort to advance in virtue.

POINT II

JESUS ADVANCED IN GRACE WITH GOD

CONSIDERATION.—“Jesus advanced in grace with God.” In what sense did Jesus advance in grace who was grace and sanctity itself? It means that He went on practicing arts of virtue which were greater, more arduous, more generous, and more perfect in their nature. The virtues that He practiced in His cradle, He practiced in a higher degree in His hidden life, in a higher degree again in His public life, and to a heroic degree in His last moments. We are also told that Jesus advanced in grace with God, which signifies that the acts of virtue which He performed not only attracted the respect of men, but also, and far more, the approval of His Heavenly Father, because they were in every sense eminent acts of virtue sanctified and exalted by the purest intention and the most ardent love.

APPLICATION.—I ought here to ask myself two questions: First, do my acts of virtue become more perfect as I advance in age? are they more numerous and more generous? do they attest greater victories gained over myself? Second, is the intention which accompanies them more pure, more free from all self-love?

AFFECTIONS.—I will pray for grace to answer these two questions in all sincerity, and will also ask to be inspired with an ardent desire to attain the degree of perfection to which I am called.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will consider, for my own encouragement, the progress I have hitherto made in virtue; while, on the other hand, I will reflect that this is in fact nothing in comparison with what remains to be accomplished.

POINT III

JESUS ADVANCED IN PERFECTION IN AN OBSCURE LIFE

CONSIDERATION.— How did Jesus advance continually in perfection and merit? Only by those means that are within our reach. By leading an unnoticed, a domestic life; by doing what men who live in their families generally do. Contemplate what He did in the humble dwelling of Nazareth — you will see nothing else. In vain will you look for those striking actions which attract the attention of the world, that world which is too blind to discern true greatness beneath the veil of simplicity.

APPLICATION.— How instructive and encouraging is every part of the life of our Divine Model! If He bids us advance after His example in perfection before God and before men, He makes it very easy for us by giving us the proof in His own person that we can do it in all situations by the most ordinary actions of domestic or community life. Why do we not do it, then? How we shall one day regret not having done it, having lost such precious time, not having understood that it concerned our dearest interests!

COLLOQUY with Jesus, who invites and encourages us by His words and example to make ever-increasing progress in virtue. Let us ask that these words, uttered by His Divine lips, "Be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect," may be always present to us, as they were to St. Andrew Avellini, who bound himself by vow to advance continually in the way of Christian perfection. (Brev., 10th November.)

ASH-WEDNESDAY

SERIES OF MEDITATIONS ON THE PASSION OF OUR LORD
JESUS CHRIST *

REMARK.—As the date of Ash-Wednesday varies every year between February 4th and March 10th, we can take from the *intercalary month* placed at the end of this volume as many meditations as are wanted before Ash-Wednesday arrives. When we come to that day, we should take the following meditation, On the Requisite Dispositions for the Holy Time of Lent; and then those that follow until the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, inclusively. After this Feast, we may take the remaining meditations of the *intercalary month*, that is, those that were not used before Lent. They will furnish sufficient matter until July 1st, with which the second volume and the last six months of the year begin. (See Preface.)

* The natural place for this series of Meditations is at the end of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. They are put here to be used in Lent, the most suitable time to meditate on the Passion. This reason sufficiently authorizes the inversion of the *order of time* generally followed by other writers.

See, at the end of the volume, four Meditations, on the Feasts of

St. Joseph, 19th March.

St. Benedict, 21st March.

The Annunciation, 25th March.

St. Aloysius Gonzaga, 21st June.

ON THE REQUISITE DISPOSITIONS

FOR THE HOLY TIME OF LENT

1st Prel. Represent to yourself Adam at the moment when, after his condemnation, he hears the humiliating words, "Dust thou art, and into dust shalt thou return." (Gen. 3: 19.)

2d Prel. Beg of God that He will deign to penetrate you with the feelings the Church desires us to be inspired with to-day.

POINT I

FIRST DISPOSITION REQUISITE: HUMILITY

CONSIDERATION.— Remember, O man! that "dust thou art, and into dust shalt thou return." (Ibid.) Who uttered these harsh words, which are heard to-day through the whole Catholic world? God Himself, nearly six thousand years ago. To whom did He address them? To Adam, our first parent, as soon as, in punishment for his sin, the sentence of death had been pronounced on him and his posterity. "Because thou hast eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat, cursed is the earth in thy work," said the Lord. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken; for dust thou art, and into dust shalt thou return." (Ibid.) But why did God add these words, which do not increase in any way the punishment already given? It was doubtless to subdue and annihilate the pride of Adam, and inspire him with such deep humility as would dispose his heart to salutary penance. Thus we see that Adam, who had begun to excuse himself, answered not, but accepted the penance imposed, and persevered in it, humble, penitent, and resigned, for the long space of nine hundred years. God was pleased with this penance, and our first parent was saved by it through the merits of the future Redeemer.

APPLICATION.— We have sinned in Adam, we have sinned ourselves, we are very guilty, we have great need of doing penance, of imploring pardon; God is ready to give it to us. But we have seen that the first feeling He seeks in the heart of a sinner is humility, and a conviction of his own unworthiness. The first disposition then into which we ought to try to enter, and in which to persevere during Lent — that time of universal penance — is a profound humility, springing from the knowledge of our nothingness and our sins. It is this which should form the principal merit of our works of penance.

AFFECTIONS.— Ask the grace to know thyself, and in view of thy miseries to acquire a profound humility which may go on increasing daily during this season of penance.

RESOLUTIONS.— To hear Mass to-day, and offer Communion for this intention.

POINT II

SECOND DISPOSITION REQUISITE: COMPUNCTION

CONSIDERATION.—“Remember, O man! that thou art dust, and into dust shalt thou return.” Who is it that utters again, every year on this day, the same words that God pronounced in the terrestrial paradise? Our holy Mother Church, by the mouth of her ministers. And to whom does she address them? To each of us, to all the faithful who assemble in the house of God. And at what moment? At the same moment when she places ashes on our foreheads — the emblem of death and penance. It is as if she said, O man! whosoever thou may be, remember that thou must die and become like unto this dust, because of sin; remember, that if thou dost not penance for thy sins, thou wilt only rise again from the dust of the tomb to pass in body and soul into a place of eternal torments.

APPLICATION.— The Church obliges us to listen to those grave and terrific truths only to inspire us, from the first day of Lent, with holy and deep compunction. Compunction of heart is the second essential disposition for whoever desires to attain one of the principal ends of Lent—salutary penance. If our works of mortification and penance are accompanied by sentiments of true contrition and humility, they will be pleasing before God. He has pledged His word that He will pardon our sins; for, says the royal Prophet, “Cor humiliatum, Deus, non despiciet.” “A contrite and humbled heart, O God! Thou wilt not despise.” (Psalm 50:19.) If we are wanting in these dispositions, ought we not to fear that all the practices of Lent, even the most painful ones, will be of little use to us?

AFFECTIONS.— Beg earnestly of God the grace of *an humble and contrite heart*; say to Him with the Prophet, “Feed us with the bread of tears, and give us for our drink tears in measure.” (Psalm 79:6.)

RESOLUTIONS.— To recite each day during Lent the Psalm MISERERE, and to endeavor to do so with the sentiments of humility and compunction which inspired the penitent and saintly king to receive the holy ashes this day with the same dispositions.

COLLOQUY with the holy King David. Beg of him to obtain for us the spirit of penance and compunction of heart. To recite the Psalm MISERERE, should time permit, in these dispositions.

ENTRANCE OF JESUS

INTO THE GARDEN OF OLIVES

1st Prel. Look at Jesus walking resolutely in the midst of His Apostles toward the Garden of Olives, to begin His dolorous Passion.

2d Prel. Beg the grace of meeting with firmness the difficulties which you will encounter in the service of God and the practice of perfection.

POINT I

"When Jesus had said these things, He went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron, where there was a garden, into which He entered."* (St. John 18:1.)

CONSIDERATION.—Fix, O my soul! thy eyes on thy Saviour, whom thou hast so often chosen for thy model; see how resolutely He goes forth to the combat, and incites to the struggle, by His words and example, His faithful disciples. "But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given me commandment, so do I. Arise, let us go hence." (St. John 14:31.)

To go where? To the battle, to death. How full these words are of love, obedience, and courage!

APPLICATION.—You see in this the generosity, the great Heart of Jesus. How different are you, who, far from resolutely meeting occasions of conquest and suffering, fly from them continually, with so much care and ingenuity! How shameful in you, who have made profession of imitating Jesus Christ more perfectly than ordinary men, who have the glory of bearing His Name, fighting under His standard, and sharing with Him labors, privations, and sufferings! Examine yourself, with a sincere desire of knowing how far you merit these reproaches.

* In the meditations on the Passion, the headings of the three Points are simply texts from the Gospel. It will therefore be very important to impress them well on the memory, because generally they contain the substance of the Points.

AFFECTIONS.— Let us admire the noble Heart and the heroic love of Jesus, and endeavor, after His example, to excite ourselves to generosity in the service of God. In all circumstances of trial, let us say, with the Apostle St. Thomas, “Eamus et nos, ut moriamur cum eo.” “Let us, also go, that we may die with Him.” (St. John 11: 16.)

RESOLUTIONS.— I will strive during this day to repair my past cowardice and infidelity.

POINT II

“Then Jesus came with them into a country place which is called Gethsemani; and He said to His disciples, Sit you here while I go yonder and pray.” (St. Matt. 26: 36.)

CONSIDERATION.— Remark how Jesus prepares for prayer. He retires into a solitary place, and separates Himself from the company of men, even of His intimate friends. He only invites them to watch and pray with Him. “Sustinete hic et vigilate mecum.” (St. Matt. 26: 41.)

APPLICATION.— O Jesus! how well dost Thou teach me how I ought to pray and meditate profitably on Thy holy law! After Thy example, when I enter the place where I am about to pray, I will say to all distracting thoughts, “Stay you here, while I go yonder and pray;” and then afterward I will vigilantly shut them out from my mind and heart, or at least prevent them from fixing themselves there.

AFFECTIONS.— Beg earnestly that God may confer on you the spirit of prayer, the gift of contemplation: “Domine, doce nos orare.” “Lord, teach us to pray.” (St. Luke 11: 1.)

RESOLUTIONS.— I will strive with greater energy and constancy than heretofore to make use of the means by which the Apostles and so many holy religious have attained a high degree of contemplation.

POINT III

"And He taketh Peter and James and John with Him, and He began to fear." (St. Mark 14:33.)

Why did the Saviour give such a glorious preference to these three disciples, and choose them to be near His person at the time of the great mysteries of His strife and His agony? The gospel does not tell us; but we may believe that, as they witnessed His glory and happiness on Mount Thabor, it was His will that they should witness also His humiliation and agony on the Mount of Olives.

APPLICATION.—How inconsistent we often are! We appreciate and envy the privilege of the three beloved disciples, whom Jesus allowed to be with Him in His agony, and we do not understand that it is a favor given to us when He sends us an occasion of suffering with Him. Far from being grateful for it, we complain, we give way to discouragement or distrust. Is this acting reasonably and with faith? Let us acknowledge our inconsistency, and humbly beg our loving Saviour to give us grace so to meditate on His sorrowful Passion, that we may draw from it a love of the cross, sorrow for our sins, compassion and resignation.

COLLOQUY with St. Bridget, who passed the greater part of her life in meditating on the Passion of Our Lord, and who received, on this account, many graces and extraordinary gifts.

AFFLICTIONS OF THE SOUL OF JESUS

1st Prel. Listen to Jesus Christ saying to His disciples, "My soul is sorrowful, even unto death."

2d Prel. Beg for Christian resignation in interior sufferings.

POINT I

"He began to grow sorrowful, and to be sad; to fear, and to be heavy." (St. Matt. 26: 38.)

CONSIDERATION.— Man had sinned by misusing the faculties of his soul, before he misused his senses and the members of his body. Therefore, by the suffering of His soul, Jesus chose to begin His Passion. These sufferings will be immense, above all created strength. He will experience them under every form the most painful, and no part of His soul was exempted, because He willed to give His Heavenly Father an entire and superabundant satisfaction, and to give us a proof of infinite love.

APPLICATION.— From the first step in His sorrowful Passion, Jesus unveiled the love which fills His heart for men, for each of us; for we were all present before Him, and we can say with the Apostle, "He loved me, and delivered Himself for me." (Gal. 2: 20). The murderers could not touch His soul, but Jesus did what they had no power to do — He suspended by miracle the ineffable joy with which the beatific vision filled His soul, and left it a prey to the terrible agony which the thought of death, and especially a cruel and violent one, naturally causes.

AFFECTIONS.— Acts of praise and thanksgiving for love so great, and, on man's part, so little deserved.

RESOLUTIONS.— To return love for love by devoting all the faculties of our being to the glory of God. To consider how we can best do so during this day.

POINT II

"Then He saith to them, My soul is sorrowful, even unto death."
(St. Matt. 26: 38.)

CONSIDERATIONS.—"My soul is sorrowful unto death," means that He was overwhelmed with the sufferings and agony of one who struggles with death, and who is pressed down by the most crushing pain of mind.

What was the cause of this load of sorrow? First, the repulsive sight of the sins of men which His Father had laid on Him because He had offered Himself as the Victim of universal expiation. "*Posuit Dominus in eo iniquitates omnium nostrum.*" "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." (Is. 53: 6.) Secondly, the vivid and detailed representation of all the torments, all the insults, that He had to undergo. Finally, the terrible thought of the uselessness of His death to a vast number of men who would harden themselves in sin. "*Quæ utilitas in sanguine meo?*" "What profit is there in my blood?" (Psalm 29: 10.)

APPLICATION.—Behold, then, O my soul! the cause of thy Saviour's immense sufferings. Dwell on them one by one, and see how far thou hast contributed to them during thy life, and particularly since thou hast made a profession of loving and serving Him more perfectly.

AFFECTIONS.—Compassion — Repentance — Gratitude.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will not only avoid all that could wound the Heart of Our Lord; but I will strive always, and specially during this day, to give Him every consolation in my power.

POINT III

"Stay you here and watch with me, while I go yonder and pray."
(St. Matt. 26: 36, 38.)

CONSIDERATION.— How did Jesus act in the extreme dejection of His Soul? First, He speaks to His three chosen disciples, and asks them to share His sorrow, and watch with Him; then He has recourse to prayer. He acted thus as Man, to serve as our Model.

APPLICATION.— We thus learn what in our interior troubles we *can* do and what we *ought* to do: we *can* seek alleviation in communicating them to a pious and discreet friend; but as men, after all, can not give us the supernatural strength that we need, we *ought* to have recourse to prayer, and expect all from God. Have you acted thus? Have you imitated those who obstinately shut up within themselves their trouble and temptations, at the risk of falling into dejection and melancholy? Or have you gone to the other extreme of those who communicate their interior suffering to everybody, and forget one thing only — that of resorting to God in prayer, and to those whom He has given you as guides in the spiritual life, so that you may receive counsel and consolation from them?

COLLOQUY with Jesus, whose soul was so troubled for my sake, according to the pious sentiments experienced during meditation.

PRAYERS OF JESUS IN THE GARDEN OF OLIVES

1st Prel. See Jesus prostrate with His face to the earth.

2d Prel. Beg constant fidelity to all the rules for praying well.

POINT I.

“And going a little further, He fell upon His face, praying.”
(St. Matt. 26: 39.)

CONSIDERATION.—Remark the extraordinary signs of respect and humility which Jesus Christ showed in His prayer to His Heavenly Father. “Kneeling down, He prayed.” (St. Luke 22: 41.) He fell upon His Face on the earth, and He remained thus prostrate as if He was unworthy to raise His Eyes to heaven. He was penetrated with the thought of the infinite majesty of Him to whom He spoke as man, and as a sinful man, bearing the weight of our iniquities. Remark also the deep feelings of filial piety expressed by the words, “My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me.” (Ibid.)

APPLICATION.—Why is our manner so often wanting in respect and propriety when we pray or meditate? Is it not because we think too little of the infinite majesty of God, and of our infinite unworthiness? Happy is the man who before he prays is accustomed to ask himself, “Before whom am I going to appear, and wherefore?” His manner will be always respectful and as the body has a powerful influence over the soul, so a humble and pious exterior will tend very much to produce respect in the mind, the imagination, and all the powers of the soul. Have we not all often had the experience of this?

AFFECTIONS.—Accuse yourself before God of your want of a lively faith and of generosity during the time of prayer and religious services.

RESOLUTIONS.— To amend henceforth, and even from this hour of meditation, all that has been imperfect in these respects in your past conduct.

POINT II

“Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.”(Ibid.)

CONSIDERATION.— Jesus gives us the example of a wonderful and heroic resignation. Like unto us in all things in His human nature, He experienced a vivid horror at the sight of death, and at the thought of the horrible sufferings and fearful humiliations which were to precede it. He supplicated and implored His Heavenly Father, with groaning and tears, to spare Him these agonizing sacrifices. And nevertheless He declared that He was ready to endure them if it were His will; and He did finally submit to them with the most entire and perfect resignation.

APPLICATION.— Behold, how we ought to pray when we ask God to exempt us or deliver us from something which is repugnant to our taste or natural inclination. We are not forbidden to supplicate earnestly that the bitter cup, the sufferings, the contradictions, which are so distasteful to nature, may depart from us; but we should always declare that, after all, we desire that His holy Will may be done in us in everything, and this we ask for every day when we say, “Thy Will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

AFFECTIONS.— Make an offering of your whole being to God. Desire always to accomplish, with a generous heart, the most holy, just, and adorable will of God.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will accustom myself to discern in all things the ruling hand of Divine Providence.

POINT III

"He prayed the third time, saying the self-same word."
(St. Matt. 26: 44.)

CONSIDERATION.—Jesus interrupted His prayer three times to go to the assistance of His disciples, who were wrapped in a false security at the moment of the greatest danger; but immediately afterward He went back to pray, and repeated with great earnestness the same petition: "My Father, if this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, Thy Will be done." (St. Matt. 26: 42.)

APPLICATION.—Two things are taught us by this. First, that we ought not to apply ourselves so long to prayer as to neglect works of charity or zeal; neither ought we to devote ourselves to these works to the neglect of prayer; but that we should sanctify zeal by prayer, and enrich prayer by zealous and charitable labors. Secondly, that we ought not to make the efficaciousness of prayer consist in a variety of forms and expressions, nor be weary of repeating the same petition.

COLLOQUY with God the Father condemning His beloved Son to agony and suffering for my sins.*

* These expressions, for *my* sins, for *me*, for love of *me*, are eminently calculated to inflame our hearts with the love of Our Divine Redeemer and to induce us to form generous resolutions. Let us therefore frequently make use of them; they are in perfect conformity with truth. Jesus, as God for whom there is neither past nor future, and in whom all things live and move, had each one of us before His eyes during the whole course of His Passion: He suffered and immolated Himself for each one of us, as if we had been alone in the world. "Dilexit me, et tradidit semetipsum pro me." "He loved me," says St. Paul, "and delivered Himself for me." (Gal. 2: 20.) These words apply equally to each one of us.

AGONY OF JESUS IN THE GARDEN OF OLIVES

1st Prel. Imagine you see Jesus in His agony bathed in blood.

2d Prel. Beg for courage and perseverance in the spiritual combat.

POINT I

"Being in an agony, His sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground." (St. Luke 22: 43-44.)

CONSIDERATION.—The Saviour's death upon the heights of Calvary before the world ought to be a striking proof of His divinity. The Roman centurion, says St. Mark, "seeing that, crying out in this manner, He had given up the ghost," said, "Indeed this man was the Son of God." (St. Mark 16: 39.) And the soldiers who were with him, *watching Jesus*, said the same thing. (Ch. 15; St. Matt. 26.) His death was not, then, preceded by that agony which is the strongest proof of man's impotence — struggling in vain against his dissolution. But Jesus, choosing to submit to all our humiliations and sorrows, *anticipated the time of His agony*. He suffered it before His other torments. And it was the more terrible and cruel because it was not the effect of physical exhaustion, but of an interior struggle between feeling and the will.

APPLICATION.—What a great proof of love, and what a profitable lesson Jesus teaches us by this! To soften the agony of death for us, and to merit for us the grace of supporting it with patience and resignation, He voluntarily endured, and offered to His Father for us, the most painful of agonies. Have I really understood this love? and what effect has it produced in me?

AFFECTIONS.—Accept humbly, from this moment, your sentence of death, and the sufferings of your last agony, as expiation for your sins, and your tepidity in the service of God.

RESOLUTIONS.— To be more generous and faithful than you have hitherto been in the spiritual combat, particularly in times of great trial.

POINT II

“As drops of blood trickling down upon the ground.”

CONSIDERATION.— This bloody sweat, of which there are few examples in history, makes us understand what was passing in the soul of Jesus during His agony of nearly two hours; it shows us how great was the terror and suffering He endured, and especially how violent was the battle going on in His Soul between nature repulsing with terror the chalice of bitterness, and the will firmly resisting the repugnance of nature.

APPLICATION.— Most certainly our Lord could have avoided this terrible and humiliating agony, but He chose to submit to it for our instruction and encouragement. Let us learn from it never to fall back from the execution of any duty, however painful it may be; and if we can not get through it without great repugnance, and as it were, in spite of ourselves, let us be consoled by the thought that this natural dislike does not destroy the merit of what we do or suffer for God, but on the contrary, rather adds to it. Jesus has assured us of this in His own Person, and how encouraging it is!

AFFECTIONS.— Praise and adore Jesus Christ, weeping for you, as Saint Bernard says, tears of blood from every pore. Thank Him for having consented to endure all the consequences of human weakness for your strength and encouragement.

RESOLUTIONS.— In all seasons of trial, I will gain courage by reflecting on these words of the Apostle: “You have not yet resisted unto blood.” (Heb. 12:4.)

POINT III

"And there appeared to Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him." (St. Luke 22: 43.)

CONSIDERATION.— The humble supplications of Jesus in His agony were not in vain. An angel came to visit Him, who strengthened His body, restored the vigor He had lost in His agony, and also fortified His Soul, praising His resignation, and showing Him all that His Passion should do for His Father's glory, and for the happiness of men. What Jesus as man had conditionally asked for, was not in truth given to Him, but His prayer has obtained a wonderful and consoling result.

APPLICATION.— Behold what will infallibly be the fruit of your recourse to God in your troubles and anguish. Never do we pray in vain. If you do not obtain release from a heavy cross which weighs on you, the angel of Divine consolation will shed the unction of grace in your heart. You will feel within you fresh strength and vigor of soul. Your cross will appear light to you. You will bear it with sweet resignation, sometimes with sensible joy, always with a fresh increase of merit. You will have obtained what you asked for.

COLLOQUY with Jesus in agony, sweating blood for love of me.

NECESSITY AND MANNER OF DOING PENANCE,

ESPECIALLY DURING LENT

1st Prel. Represent to yourself Jesus Christ saying these words: "Except you do penance, ye shall all likewise perish." (St. Luke 13: 5.)

2d Prel. Beg the spirit of penance, united to deep feelings of humility and compunction.

POINT I

GOD IMPOSES PENANCE ON US AS A DUTY

CONSIDERATION.— The command that God gives us to do penance is formal, universal, and denunciatory. He does not say, Except you do penance, you shall perish *perhaps* or *probably*; but simply, *you shall all perish*. And why shall we perish? Because we are sinners, and after the loss of baptismal innocence, there is no other road to Heaven but that of penance. Again, why? Because the flesh rebels against the Spirit, and continually inclines us toward sin; consequently, says St. Paul, "Si autem Spiritu facta carnis mortificaveritis, vivetis." "If by the Spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live." (Rom. 8: 13.)

APPLICATION.— We are, then, obliged to do penance, and a penance proportioned, says the Council of Trent, to the number and gravity of our sins. We are obliged to do it at all times, but especially in the holy time of Lent; and all of us, whatever may be our age or our strength, we can all do penance in one way or another. The Fathers of the desert, men eminent for their penance, made it consist principally in *fasting*, *vigils*, and corporal punishment. We shall see, in the three Points of this Meditation, how we can practice these three kinds of penance. And first, as regards

fasting. If we can not observe it in all its rigor, we can observe it in part; we can retrench our ordinary food, and confine ourselves with due discretion to what is absolutely necessary; we can mortify our taste in eating and drinking by depriving ourselves habitually of dainties. Consider before God what you can and will do during these days of penance, and be faithful to what you resolve upon.

AFFECTIONS.—Humble yourself in reflecting on the difference between your fast and that of our Divine Lord.

RESOLUTIONS.—To be firm in rejecting all pretexts for infringing on the resolutions you have made with regard to substituting other penances for the strict fast prescribed, if you are not able to observe it.

POINT II

OUR VOCATION MAKES PENANCE A DUTY

CONSIDERATION.—In virtue of our vows and of the double end of our vocation, we are obliged to tend to perfection by continually contradicting our natural inclinations, and obtaining the salvation of our neighbor at the expense of our comfort, often of our health; and all this evidently requires the spirit of sacrifice and mortification, or of a continual penance.

APPLICATION.—The penitents of the desert united to their fasts, vigils and hard labor. If, like them, or like many religious at this day, we are not obliged to break our sleep at midnight to watch in the sanctuary, let us at least rise quickly from sleep always at the first sound of the bell, whatever fatigue or difficulty we may experience; let us at least *watch* in our meditation, and in all our spiritual exercises, *never* giving way to sleep or spiritual torpor. This will be a very painful struggle.

AFFECTIONS.—Offer yourself to the Lord as a liv-

ing holocaust continually immolated on the altar of His love.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will be exact in rising, not only with promptitude but with great ardor, thus overcoming sloth; and I will endeavor, by fervent aspirations, to excite myself to generosity in the service of God.

POINT III

OUR OWN INTEREST MAKES PENANCE A DUTY

CONSIDERATION.— It is an article of faith, that all that we have not expiated in this world by penance will be expiated rigorously by the fire of purgatory; therefore, said St. Austin, “Aut pœnitendum aut urendum,” “Do penance or burn.” We must choose. Can we hesitate, if we value our dearest interests? If we do, we shall be very blind, and enemies to ourselves; and the more so, because we have so many fruitful means of doing penance and of paying off the debts due to our sins.

APPLICATION.— Besides the means already pointed out, can we not, by the continual mortification of our senses and our bodies, imitate, at least at a distance, the *corporal mortifications* of the Fathers of the desert? To habituate ourselves to kneel or sit without a comfortable support; to pass through the streets or public places without ever satisfying our curiosity; to observe silence and other points of rule most exactly and constantly, is to do penance, and, if continuous, it becomes a severe one. This is to live in the practice of a continual abnegation of ourselves.

COLLOQUY with Jesus Christ, the great Model of penitents, in conformity with the AFFECTIONS and RESOLUTIONS of the preceding Points.

JESUS REPROVES HIS DISCIPLES,

AND GOES TO MEET THE TRAITOR JUDAS

1st Prel. Look at Jesus when He says these words: "Sleep ye now, and take your rest: behold, he is at hand that will betray me." (St. Matt. 26: 45, 46.)

2d Prel. Beg grace to draw great fruit from this meditation.

POINT I

"And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping. And he saith to Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? Couldst thou not watch one hour?" (St. Mark 14: 37.)

CONSIDERATION.— This reproach so confounded the three Apostles that the Evangelist says, "They knew not what to answer Him." It must have been especially bitter to St. Peter, who such a short time previously had been making protestations of fidelity and constancy. This was why our Divine Saviour addressed him personally: "Simon, sleepest thou? What, while I, thy Master, have prayed and endured an extreme agony, hast thou not had the courage to watch one hour with me in prayer, though I expressly commanded thee to do so; and thou art about this moment to be attacked by thy enemies?" Certainly the reproach was well deserved.

APPLICATION.— Alas! how many times you have deserved the same reproach by your frequent languor and slumbering in your spiritual duties, and especially during the hour of meditation!— that precious time which is given to you that you may foresee and prepare for all that the glory of your Divine Master and your own greatest interests demand from you during the day.

AFFECTIONS.— Humble yourself before God. Repent of your past faults. Excite yourself to greater energy and perseverance.

RESOLUTIONS.— When tempted during meditation to give way to sloth, or even to allow myself to be overcome by sleep, I will reflect on the reproach made by our Lord to Saint Peter: “Simon. sleepest thou?” This thought will suffice to prevent me from yielding to the temptation.

POINT II

“Watch ye and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (St. Matt. 26: 41.)

CONSIDERATION.— Spiritual lukewarmness, united to that confidence which springs from the feeble desire of virtue and inefficacious resolution, is a dangerous state, and leads those who indulge in it into fatal delusions. Because they intend to do well, and are, like the Apostles, prodigal in grand promises, they think all is right with them, and they keep themselves in a false security: as if there were not a great difference between willing and doing a thing, and as if we had of ourselves strength to work out our salvation. Jesus Christ tells us the contrary when He says, “The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak;” and that is why He immediately adds these solemn words, “Watch and pray.” Be always on your guard, always distrustful of self, always armed with prayer; for if not, you will certainly fall under temptation, under the deceitful attacks of your enemies.

APPLICATION.— Examine yourself carefully, and dread any delusion about your state — a delusion so much the more to be feared because faults and negligences, if they become habitual, cease to be noticed, to inspire us with any fear.

AFFECTIONS.— Let us strive to acquire self-knowledge; and thank God for having called us to a state of life in which we are constantly assisted by the mild but efficacious vigilance of our superiors.

RESOLUTIONS.— Let us examine if it is with us as with those religious who fancy that they practice virtue, merely because they esteem and love it, and frequently preach to others.

POINT III

“And leaving them, He went again and He prayed. . . . Then He cometh to His disciples, and saith to them, Sleep ye now, and take your rest; behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of God shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us go; behold, he is at hand that will betray me.” (St. Matt. 26: 44, 45, 46.)

CONSIDERATION.— The firmness with which Jesus Christ now goes forward to meet tortures and death, the mere thought of which had thrown Him into an agony, shows plainly the powerful effects of prayer — of that long and fervent prayer that He had made to His Father. We shall also see, in the shameful flight of the Apostles at the first danger, the loss that the soul sustains which neglects to seek God in fervent prayer.

APPLICATION.— It is from prayer and communication with God that we draw the strength we need in occasions of difficulty. If in our daily meditation we were careful to foresee these occasions, to animate ourselves to meet them, and humbly beg for grace, we should never lose courage; at the critical moment we should say with Jesus, “The hour is come; let us go and practice the resolutions made this morning under the inspiration of grace.” We should then count as many victories as we have struggles.

COLLOQUY with our Divine Saviour according to the **AFFECTIONS** and **RESOLUTIONS** suggested in the preceding Points.

TREASON OF JUDAS

1st Prel. Behold the traitor Judas giving Jesus a kiss.

2d Prel. Beg from God a salutary fear, and a great distrust of yourself.

POINT I

“As He yet spoke, behold Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and clubs.” (St. Matt. 26: 47.)

CONSIDERATION.— We have to-day to meditate on a profound and awful mystery of perversion. Judas, one of the twelve chosen disciples of Jesus, taught by Him for three years, confirmed in the faith by so many miracles, loaded with favors, is become the tool of those who plot the death of the Lord. He has sold Him to them for thirty pieces of silver.* He comes treacherously to deliver Him into their hands. Alas! such is the depth of blindness and perversity into which, by degrees, avarice has plunged unhappy Judas! We may, indeed, cry out with David — taught by his own weakness — “*Quid est homo?*” “What is man?”

APPLICATION.— Let the misfortune of another serve as a warning to you. See if there be not certain passions in you which have never been conquered, or which, after having been repressed, have, little by little, regained their former empire. There need not be many of these; one only may suffice to overcome virtue on which we think we can fully rely. The history of

* The details of this infamous compact are thus related by the Evangelist St. Matthew: “Then” (the eve of Holy-Thursday) “went one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, to the chief priests, and said to them, What will you give me, and I will deliver Him unto you? But they appointed him thirty pieces of silver.” “*At illi constituerunt ei triginta argenteos.*” (C. 26: 14, 15.) The silver sicle (there was also one of gold) was equivalent at that time to about three francs. The price of the treason of Judas did not, therefore, amount to one hundred francs!

the Church and of religious orders has recorded but too many falls and apostasies which were caused by a single passion not thoroughly eradicated.

AFFECTIONS.— Beg of God to enlighten you, “Domine, fac ut videam.” “Lord, that I may see,” (St. Luke 18: 41,) in order that I may discover which is the one of my passions that should inspire me with fear for the future.

RESOLUTIONS.—Not to rest until I have completely subdued my predominant passion.

POINT II

“And forthwith coming to Jesus, he said, Hail, Rabbi; and he kissed Him.” (St. Matt. 26: 49.)

CONSIDERATION.— What revolting hypocrisy! Under the appearance of the most respectful affection, Judas concealed the blackest perfidy. By a kiss he pointed out and delivered up his Divine Master to the fury of His enemies. Did he, then, believe that he could deceive God, as one can deceive men? Oh! how does passion blind its victims!

APPLICATION.— There is no one who does not detest the crime of Judas; but are there not Christians in our days who renew it by making sacrilegious Communions? What are they doing in reality but delivering up Jesus in as much as they can, under the cloak of piety, to the demons who are in their hearts? May God preserve us from such a crime! But there are acts of hypocrisy less revolting, but which we ought nevertheless to fear and detest, such as contenting ourselves with exterior virtue and piety; being more careful about regularity before superiors or brethren than when alone; alleging false pretexts to attain our ends, blaming ourselves in order to obtain praise, and other things of this kind. Is not this hypocrisy and dissimulation, and have we nothing to reproach ourselves with under this head?

AFFECTIONS.—Detestation of the crime of Judas; compassion for the suffering and humiliation which it caused our Divine Lord.

RESOLUTIONS.—To act always with simplicity and an upright will; and to aim at solid virtue, rejoicing that our motives and intentions are known to God.

POINT III

“And Jesus said to him, Friend, whereto art thou come? . . . Judas dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?” (St. Matt. 26: 50; St. Luke 22: 48.)

CONSIDERATION.—Which is the more wonderful, the goodness and ineffable sweetness of Jesus, or the hardness of heart of Judas? “My friend”; by giving the name to Judas, Jesus signified that He was still ready to pardon him. By asking him, “Whereto art thou come?” He wished to help him to look into himself, to recognize and abhor his crime. But Judas was unmoved. Our Divine Lord made another effort to convert him: He showed him that He knew his treachery, and was horrified at it, by these words: “Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?” But all was in vain; Judas remained obstinate.

APPLICATION.—The ineffable goodness of Jesus ought to redouble our love for Him; and the inconceivable hardness of the traitor Judas should fill us with salutary fear, and an extreme distrust of ourselves, no matter how many years we have been in religion, or to what degree of virtue we believe we have attained. Let us ask that this may be the fruit of this meditation in the

COLLOQUY with our loving Saviour, dwelling on the Affections and Resolutions already indicated.

JESUS IS TAKEN CAPTIVE — FLIGHT OF THE APOSTLES

- 1st Prel.* Behold the soldiers, having come to arrest Jesus, falling to the ground, and the Apostles running away.
2d Prel. Beg the grace of a faithful attachment to Jesus Christ by the bonds of love.

POINT I

"Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth, and said to them, Whom seek ye? They answered Him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith to them, I am He. As soon, therefore, as He said to them, I am He, they went backward, and fell to the ground. If, therefore, you seek Me, let these go their way. Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, and struck the servant of the high-priest, and cut off his right ear. And the name of the servant was Malchus. But Jesus, having touched his ear, healed it." (St. John 18: 4, 5, 6, 8, 10; St. Luke 22: 51.)

CONSIDERATION.— Why did Jesus multiply the proofs of His Divinity by wonderful miracles at the moment when He began His sorrowful Passion? In order that He might show that He was taken prisoner, bound, and "offered because it was His own will," "*Oblatus est quia ipse voluit*," as Isaias had foretold. (C. 53: 7.) If it had not been thus, how would the martyrs have replied to the insult of their tyrants? *What folly to adore a God who was put to death by men!* And how could they have convinced them that this violent death was not the result of powerlessness, but of the love of Jesus for the human race?

APPLICATION.— Let us learn to recognize and appreciate the indulgent goodness of God to men. If He obliges them to believe with humility, mysteries which they can not understand, only because He tells them, He helps their belief not by grace alone, but by the testimony of miracles which appeal to the senses, and which He is ready to renew as often as circumstances require it.

AFFECTIONS.— Praise and bless the Lord our God, who delivered Himself to death for us, and who asks in return from us, His reasonable creatures, only that service which is most conformable to sound reason.

RESOLUTIONS.— Strive incessantly to increase in the love of this good and merciful God.

POINT II

“Then they took Jesus, and bound Him.” (St. John 18:12.)

CONSIDERATION.—How great was the blindness of the Jews! In spite of the wonderful miracles of goodness and power which they witnessed, they persevered in their criminal intentions — they dared to lay hands on Jesus. And because He gave Himself up into their hands, they thought that they had conquered. Alas! we have here a proof that even miracles are unable to convert the man who indulges his passions. Passion blinds a man, and stifles in him the voice of reason and of conscience. See, on the other hand, the gentleness of Jesus! He lets Himself be taken, bound, loaded with fetters, pushed about, struck, and grossly insulted in the way from Gethsemani to the city of Jerusalem.

APPLICATION.— The bonds of original sin and our own sin held us captive under the yoke of the devil. There was no power in men or angels to break our bonds. Jesus Christ alone could, and His love for us made Him do it. He allowed Himself to be loaded with fetters, to give us the liberty of the children of God. Do we think often of this? Do we think of it as we ought?

AFFECTIONS.— Admiration, gratitude, and desire of intimate union with Jesus Christ in the bonds of ardent love.

RESOLUTIONS.— By constant vigilance over ourselves, to guard against those irregular affections which darken the understanding and harden the heart.

POINT III

"Then the disciples all leaving Him, fled." (St. Matt. 26: 56.)

CONSIDERATION.— Behold, then, the end of the promises and eager protestations of the disciples. All had assured their beloved Master, that they were determined never to forsake Him, to *go with Him to prison and to death*. But as soon as they saw Him in the hands of the soldiers, they all, without exception, shamefully forsook Him, and sought their safety in flight. Then were the words of Jesus verified: "All you shall be scandalized in me this night," (St. Matt. 26: 31,) meaning they should be unfaithful. Because they saw Him bound and led to prison, they lost faith in His divinity, His omnipotence, and forsook Him; "for it is written, I will strike the Shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be dispersed." (Ibid.) Such was the fatal consequence of their presumption, and their neglect of gaining strength by prayer before the struggle, as our Divine Saviour had expressly recommended them to do.

APPLICATION.— We condemn the inconstancy and cowardice of the Apostles; we blame them for having, by their desertion and flight, so cruelly afflicted the heart of our loving Saviour. But do we not, therefore, condemn ourselves — we who have been so inconstant, so cowardly in following Jesus — we who are habitually unfaithful to our promises and resolutions, and that from the same causes to which we attribute the inconstancy and shameful desertion of the Apostles?

COLLOQUY with St. Peter, whose remorse for his inconstancy and cowardice was so great that he was remarkable during the remainder of his life for profound humility and extreme distrust of himself.

JESUS LED FROM THE HOUSE OF ANNAS

TO THE TRIBUNAL OF CAIPHAS

1st Prel. To imagine I see Jesus in the midst of the soldiers, bound and led like a criminal, in the city of Jerusalem.

2d Prel. To beg for constancy and a continual increase of generosity in the service of God.

POINT I

“And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was father-in-law of Caiphas, who was the high-priest of that year, and Annas sent Him bound to Caiphas, where the scribes and the ancients were assembled.” (St. John 18: 13, 24; St. Matt. 26: 57.)

CONSIDERATION.— Here begins for Our Divine Lord that long series of humiliations and sufferings, to which He so generously devoted himself, in the Garden of Olives, and which is to terminate only with His life. The streets, the public places, the tribunals of Jerusalem, witness His apparent helplessness, and the state of subjection to which His enemies vainly imagine that their efforts have reduced Him; for He offers them no resistance, He submits to be led whithersoever they desire, and He is obedient to all their commands. He will be dragged in succession, in the midst of hooting, from Annas to Caiphas, from Caiphas to the council, from the council to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, from Herod back to Pilate, from thence to the prætorium to be scourged, then to the steps to be shown to the people; finally, He will be led down into the public place, whence He will go forth, obedient unto death, bearing His cross to Calvary.

APPLICATION.— Let us learn from the example of our Divine Master never to resist the orders of superiors, to pass from one house to the other, from one employment to another, as they judge proper. These changes will perhaps be frequent, and often painful to nature. They may cause temptations, impatience,

or weariness. Let us, then, cast our eyes on Jesus, and the difficulties will disappear.

AFFECTIONS.— Do with me, Lord, according to Thy will, for I know that Thou dost love me. (*Aug.*)

RESOLUTIONS.— To recognize the hand of Providence in all the vicissitudes of the religious life. To submit willingly thereto, and, when necessary, to conquer all natural feelings of repugnance to the duties assigned.

POINT II

"The high-priest, therefore, asked Jesus of His disciples and of His doctrine. Jesus answered him, I have spoken openly to the world; . . . ask them who have heard what I have spoken to them." (St. John 18: 19, 21.)

CONSIDERATION.— The question of the high-priest was twofold — on the disciples of Jesus, and His doctrine. Our Divine Saviour passed over the first in silence. Alas! what good testimony could He bear of His disciples? At this very moment one denied Him, and the others were hidden, for fear of sharing their Master's fate. He loved them too much to speak evil of them; He was silent. As to His doctrine, the questions put to Him were dictated by malice, by the secret desire of finding a pretext for blame and condemnation. Jesus contented himself by appealing to public testimony, showing plainly that He knew the guilty motives of His judges, and that He had nothing to fear from a severe but just examination of all that he had said and taught.

APPLICATION.— Our Divine Master gives us an example of silence when we can not speak well of our neighbor, unless our rule, or the law of charity, compels us to manifest some faults of our brethren, for their good or that of the community. We may learn from Him, also, to be watchful over our words, to be reserved in conversation, and to make a careful preparation of what we have to say in public, so that we

may be shielded by just criticism, and, if afterward falsely accused, we may be able to appeal to the testimony of those who heard us.

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for grace to keep silence or to speak to the purpose.

RESOLUTIONS.— To exercise prudence and reserve in conversation with our brethren, in order that we may have less difficulty in maintaining the necessary discretion in our intercourse with seculars.

POINT III

“And when He had said these things, one of the servants standing by gave Jesus a blow, saying, Answerest Thou the high-priest so? Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil; but if well, why strikest thou me?”
(St. John 18: 22, 23.)

CONSIDERATION.— It is almost impossible for us to understand the intensity of the outrage thus offered to our God and our loving Saviour. He received a slap in the face, the greatest insult one man can give another in the open court, from the hand of a servant; and it was given as a mark of correction from a brutal man, to Him who is Master of the creation and Infinite Wisdom. What revenge did He take for this cruel insolence? He returned a meek and prudent answer, and showed not the slightest resentment.

APPLICATION.— Compare your conduct with that of your Lord. Are you patient and gentle, I do not say under similar circumstances, which are simply impossible for you, but under slight injuries, or even imaginary ones? And yet, who are *you*?

COLLOQUY with our Divine Saviour. Sympathize with Him in His humiliations, offer to submit, for His love, to every species of insult and unkindness.

JESUS ACCUSED AND EXAMINED

AT THE TRIBUNAL OF CAIPHAS

1st Prel. Imagine you see Jesus standing with His hands bound, before iniquitous judges.

2d Prel. Ask to obtain solid virtue, and especially great purity of conscience.

POINT I

“And the chief priests and the whole council sought false witness against Jesus, that they might put Him to death, and they found none.” (St. Matt. 26: 59, 60.)

CONSIDERATION.— So holy was our Lord’s life that His sworn enemies, even though they brought a great many witnesses — and those false ones — against Him, could find nothing of which to accuse Him, nothing that was even the shadow of sin, or a single imperfection.

APPLICATION.— The life of a religious ought to be so perfect, that the wicked who watch him closely should not be able to find fault with him in word or deed, either in public or private life. Can this be truly said of you? You may perhaps believe so; but were you to know what others think of you, what they say of you, and what they would say in your presence did they not fear to wound your pride and self-love, you would cease to labor under such a delusion. And, supposing that men have nothing with which to reproach you, are you innocent in the eyes of Him who sees our hearts, our motives, and intentions?

AFFECTIONS.— I will humble myself before God. What a contrast does my life present to that of our Divine Model! What sins have I not committed; of how many faults and imperfections am I not daily guilty! And even of these, the greater number are hidden from me. I implore Thy mercy with deep contrition, and confidence in Thy boundless mercy.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will keep a strict watch over myself during this day, in order that nothing in my conduct may be offensive to God or unedifying to man.

POINT II

“And the high-priest, rising up, said to Him, Answerest Thou nothing to the things which these witness against Thee? But Jesus held His peace.” (St. Matt. 26: 62, 63.)

CONSIDERATION.— Admire, in this instance, the silence of your Divine Lord and Saviour. His character was assailed, His reputation publicly compromised, His life even in imminent danger. All these considerations seemed to render it incumbent on Him to defend and justify Himself, while, at the same time, it would have been so easy for Him to prove triumphantly the justice of His cause. But He left His defense in the hands of His Father, and was silent.

APPLICATION.— What a contrast there is here again, between us and our Master! He is silent under false accusation, and we, who glory in being His disciples, can not hear a reproof that we know we deserve, or a kind observation, without beginning to defend and excuse ourselves; sometimes even at the expense of truth. Have I not often had to reproach myself on this head?

AFFECTIONS.— Gratitude toward our Divine Lord, who atones by His silence for my false excuses and spiritual pride.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will receive reproof with humility, and without attempting to excuse myself, and will listen in silence and meekness to all remarks which may wound my self-love.

POINT III

"And the high-priest said to Him, I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us if Thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith to him, Thou hast said it." (St. Matt. 26: 63, 64.)

CONSIDERATION.— We learn a valuable lesson from this: as long as our Lord's own person was concerned, He kept silence; but when there was question of His Father's glory, or the salvation of souls, or a point of faith, He spoke, and confessed the truth; and He confessed it freely and unreservedly, though He knew it would cost Him His life.

APPLICATION.— It is a matter of great difficulty to know when to speak and when to be silent; it requires thought, calmness of mind, and great firmness of character. We shall find that our indiscreet words have arisen from our deficiency in one or other of these qualities. Have we not sometimes also sacrificed truth by keeping silence, or being guilty of dissimulation, or keeping back the truth without a rightful cause?

AFFECTIONS.— How far am I still removed, O my God! from the liberty of Thy true children, from the sincerity and firmness of the confessors of the faith. But with the assistance of Thy grace, which I now implore, I will endeavor to attain these virtues.

RESOLUTIONS.— To reflect always before speaking. To overcome all fear, when religion, the obligations of our state, conscience, or the salvation of our neighbor, require us to speak. To tell the truth, and the whole truth.

COLLOQUY with our Merciful Saviour. Beg of Him to enable us to meditate on all the circumstances of His Passion in such a manner as to profit by the consideration of it.

JESUS CONDEMNED AS A BLASPHEMER

1st Prel. Behold Jesus, gentle and humble, in the midst of blood-thirsty men, who cry out, "He is guilty of death."

2d Prel. Beg grace to know and love Jesus Christ ever more and more.

POINT I

"Then the high-priest rent his garments, saying, He hath blasphemed; what further need have we of witnesses?" (St. Matt. 26: 65.)

CONSIDERATION.—How detestable was the hypocrisy of Caiphas and his party! Under an appearance of piety and zeal, they hid the mortal hatred they bore our Lord, and their long-conceived plan of putting Him to death. Not wishing to enrage the people against themselves, they sought a specious excuse for their conduct; and Caiphas made sure he could find one by conjuring Jesus to say if He were really the Son of God; for if He said no, he should be able to condemn Him as an impostor, because the people had believed Him to be God; if He said yes, he would sentence Him as a blasphemer; and then he would use some of the expressive signs customary to the Jews, to make people believe he was overwhelmed with horror at the sin. How ingenious passion is to attain its ends!

APPLICATIONS.—Have I never dissimulated? Have I never imposed on men, on my brethren, on my superiors? Have I never concealed a wrong intention under a fair exterior, or tried to justify in my own eyes some forbidden pleasure in which I take delight? But it is God who will judge me, therefore, what use is there in all this? What will be the end of it?

AFFECTIONS.—Casting yourself at the feet of Jesus, express your detestation of all deceit and hypocrisy, even in trivial things.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will often examine, in the presence of God, the motives of my words and actions.

POINT II

“Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy, what think you? But they, answering, said, He is guilty of death.” (St. Matt. 26: 65, 66.)

CONSIDERATION.— The judges who pronounced this sentence upon the All-holy were men inflamed with hatred and blinded by passion. They hated Him because He had confessed the truth, and done righteously.

APPLICATION.— In this world, the innocent are often calumniated and oppressed by the crafty; and it is permitted by God, for wise and merciful reasons. And so, in this instance, Caiphas was the instrument by which God, made man, should complete the sacrifice of His life in reparation to His Father for the sins of mankind. That wicked sentence of death opened to us all, the gates of eternal life.

AFFECTIONS.— O the depth of the wisdom and the providence of God! How boundless is His mercy to men, and especially to me, who by sin, the true cause of the death of Christ, have so frequently repeated the sentence of Caiphas!

RESOLUTIONS.— I will henceforth live only for Him who died to restore me to life. I will abandon myself blindly, now and in all things, to the guidance of Divine Providence.

POINT III

“But they answering, said, He is guilty of death.” (Ibid.)

CONSIDERATION.— If we look on Jesus, according to the expression of the Apostle, as the *new Adam*, who is to expiate the sin of the *first Adam* and the innumer-

able sins of his whole posterity in His own person, then indeed, "*Reus est mortis.*" "He is guilty of death." It was in this sense that the Eternal Father ratified the sentence pronounced against His Son, and He Himself accepted it in loving silence.

APPLICATION.—O my soul! thou hast sinned in Adam, thou hast sinned thyself, thou didst cause the death of Jesus. The sentence, "He is guilty of death," has been pronounced by Divine justice against thee; but the Son of God made man became thy substitute, accepted it in thy stead, and gave back to thee eternal life.

AFFECTIONS.—"*Moriar mihi amore tui, qui dedisti vitam tuam mihi.*" "May I die for love of Thee, O Jesus! who didst sacrifice Thyself for me!" (Prayer of a pious anchorite.)

RESOLUTIONS.—I will endeavor by constant mortification to fulfill this aspiration of a heart burning with love. From this day forth, I will lose no opportunity of practicing the virtue of self-denial.

COLLOQUY with the holy angels present with our Lord at the tribunal of Caiphas, and witnesses of the insults there offered to Him.

MOTIVES FOR PENANCE

DERIVED FROM THE THOUGHT OF THE EVIL WHICH
SIN HAS WROUGHT

1st *Prel.* Imagine you hear St. Peter saying to the people of Jerusalem, "Repent therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." (Acts 3: 19.)

2d *Prel.* Beg for a strong impulse of the will to comply with the Apostle's precept.

POINT I

MULTITUDE OF OUR SINS

CONSIDERATION.—Go over the past years of your life in spirit — before and after your First Communion, before and after your entrance into religion, the places where you have lived, the sins you have committed; run rapidly over the commandments of God and the Church, the obligations attached to your vows, the offices and employments that have been confided to you; and you will be surprised and terrified at the sight of your innumerable sins. What would it be if you saw them as God sees them!

APPLICATION.—For a single mortal sin, Adam and his posterity were condemned to death and eternal torments; for a single venial sin, those great friends of God, Moses, David, and Ezechias, suffered severe punishment — a feeble shadow only, however, of the punishment for the smallest sin in the next world. What ought I, then, to expect, who have committed so many sins? It matters nothing that I forget them; God never forgets. He will leave nothing unpunished, not even the slight fault of an *idle word*. Our Lord Himself has told us so. We have many motives, then, to induce us to do real and continual penance; and in this holy time we shall receive special graces, which will make the practice of it easier. "Ecce nunc tempus acceptabile." "Behold, now is the acceptable time." (II. Cor. 6: 2.)

AFFECTIONS.— Acknowledge humbly before God your sins and infidelities. Express your earnest desire to do penance for them. Ask grace to accomplish this desire.

RESOLUTIONS.— Resolve on certain acts of penance and mortification which you will perform each day of this second week of Lent, as you have already done during the first week.

POINT II

THE INJURY THAT SIN IS TO GOD

CONSIDERATION.— Each mortal sin is a threefold insult to God, and its malice is infinite, inasmuch as it is committed against him whose Majesty is infinite. We offend Him by *insubordination* and *rebellion*: God commands, and we do not obey. We offend Him by *contempt*: we prefer a transitory and vile enjoyment, sometimes a shameful one, to God and His laws. We injure Him by *ingratitude*: we make use of His very gifts to offend and insult Him. Each venial sin is also a three-fold injury; it is certainly of a slighter kind, but still its malice is so great that, if by a single venial sin we could change all the lost souls into saints who should praise God eternally in Heaven, we should not commit it, because the praises of all the human race could not compensate God for the injury done to Him by one venial sin.

APPLICATION.— And the sins which you have committed against the Lord your God have contained malice such as this; and both faith and reason teach us that this malice increases in proportion to the light and grace we have received. What ought we, then, to think about our venial sins? Who can count them? What an additional motive for penance during these chosen days, of which the Divine Office says, "The days of penance are come, to reclaim us from our

sins!" "Advenerunt nobis dies poenitentiae ad redimenda peccata."

AFFECTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS.—As in the preceding Point.

POINT III

THE INJURY DONE TO OUR LORD BY SIN

CONSIDERATION.—Our sins have been an injury to our Lord Jesus Christ. The Prophet Isaias speaks of our Lord as "Virum Dolorum," the "Man of Sorrows," (Isaias 53: 3,) above all other men; and it was our sins that made Him so; the sins of the whole world were laid on Him; and God beheld Him as the guilty one, on whom the weight of Divine justice was to fall. "Attritus est propter scelera nostra." "He was bruised for our sins," (Is. 53: 5,) says the Holy Ghost. They were our sins which scourged Him, which crowned Him with thorns, which struck Him, spat upon Him, nailed Him to the cross, and made Him die upon it.

APPLICATION.—This thought ought to overwhelm us with shame: There were times in my life when, in union with the cruel Jews, I cried out, "Let Him be crucified!" and, "Not this man, but Barabbas — not this man, but my passion." There have been times when, in union with the murderers, I ran the nails into my Saviour's hands and feet. I have done this, as far as I could, every time I committed a mortal sin. And every time I have committed a venial sin, I have added fresh suffering to the open wounds of Jesus. Thoughts like these armed the holy penitents of the desert against themselves. Imitate them during these holy days of universal penance and expiation.

COLLOQUY with our Divine Saviour, in conformity with the AFFECTIONS and RESOLUTIONS of the two preceding Points.

JESUS MADE THE SPORT

OF THE SOLDIERS AND OF THE SERVANTS OF CAIPHAS

1st Prel. Behold Jesus in the midst of vile soldiers and insolent servants, who pour on Him insults and outrages.

2d Prel. Beg the grace of knowing the value of humiliations, and of loving them, after the example of Jesus Christ, your King and your Model.

POINT I

“And the men who held Him mocked Him.” (St. Luke 22: 63.)

CONSIDERATION.—When Caiphas, triumphant at having condemned Jesus, went to take his night’s rest, he left his captive in the hands of the guard, or rather, gave Him up to the insolence of his servants and of the soldiery of the *prætorium*. They immediately dragged Him into a subterranean prison for criminals. What a humiliation for our Blessed Lord! There was no rest for Him there. The hatred that they knew their masters had for Jesus stirred them up, and, gathering around Him, they made brutal sport of Him, and tried which could excel the other in showering ridicule, scorn, blasphemy, and curses on Him; and this scene of horror lasted throughout the rest of the night.

APPLICATION.—Try to form a vivid idea of the suffering and humiliation of our Lord, made the sport of vile and insolent men during the whole night, without a moment’s rest; and then nights of suffering will appear more endurable to you, and the days, which perhaps you have to spend among children, or others who are vulgar, ungrateful, and petulant, will seem less wearisome, less unbearable.

AFFECTIONS.—Compassionate the humiliations of your Divine Master. Acknowledge with sorrow the share you have had in inflicting them on Him by indulging your pride.

RESOLUTIONS.— To bear all contempt in silence, or at least without showing resentment.

POINT II

“Then did they spit in His face.” (St. Matt. 26:67.)

CONSIDERATION.— They spat in His face! If this were not recorded in the gospel, we could not have believed that the brutality and cruelty of men could go so far, or that God, made man, could have allowed and borne such an insult, the greatest and the most keenly felt which could be given to the lowest of men. But our Lord allowed it, and bore it again and again, without a movement, without a word, as it had been foretold by the Prophet Isaias, “*Faciem meam non averti a conspuentibus in me.*” “I have not turned away my face from them that rebuked me and spit upon me.” (Is. 50:6.)

APPLICATION.— And yet men often complain, become indignant, and long to be revenged, if they are injured, or even if they are not sufficiently considered or treated as they think they deserve. Ought they not rather to fall at the feet of Jesus, and cry out with St. Bernard, “What, shall my Master and my King be insulted and spat upon by His vilest subjects, and shall I be honored, who have deserved for my sins to be cast with the refuse of the human race to the bottom of hell? No, never! Let me rather be forgotten and despised by all men in this world, that I may obtain mercy in eternity.”

AFFECTIONS.— To correspond with these sentiments.

RESOLUTIONS.— Ask for the love of humiliation.

POINT III

"And they blindfolded Him, and smote His face. And they asked Him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that struck Thee?"
(St. Luke 22: 64.)

CONSIDERATION.— In grief and silence we will contemplate the King of glory covered with reproach, and drinking to the very dregs that cup of humiliation which He accepted in the Garden of Olives. He is seated on a block of wood, His hands are bound, His eyes blindfolded, He is surrounded by coarse, half-intoxicated men, who, one after the other, strike Him on the face and buffet Him, and cry out Prophecy, who is it that struck Thee? And then they pour a flood of insults and blasphemies on Him. Who is suffering these insults? Why does He thus humble Himself? And for whom?

APPLICATION.— When we meditate on the three degrees of humility, we often resolve that we will rather be despised and thought nothing of by the world, be contemned and looked down upon with our Master, than be esteemed and highly exalted before men. What progress have we made in the practice of these resolutions?

COLLOQUY with the holy Angels, who witnessed the sufferings and insults inflicted on our Lord during that night. Beg of them to praise and bless that Divine Saviour for us and with us, and to obtain for us the sublime sentiments which inspired St. John of the Cross, when he exclaimed, "*Pati et contemni, propter te, Domine.*" "Lord Jesus, I only ask that I may suffer and be despised with Thee."

ST. PETER'S THREEFOLD DENIAL

1st Prel. Behold the Apostle in the hall of Caiphas, standing near the fire, in company with the soldiers, and servants of the high-priest.

2d Prel. Ask the grace of knowledge and distrust of self.

POINT I

"Now when Peter was in the court below, there cometh one of the maid-servants of the high-priest, and when she had seen Peter warming himself, looking on him she saith, Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. But he denied, saying, I neither know nor understand what thou sayest." (St. Mark 14: 66, 67, 68.)

CONSIDERATION.— Peter, having recovered from his terror in the garden, followed Jesus afar off to the hall of Caiphas, and there, in answer to a woman's words, the prince of the Apostles denied his Lord. A short time before, he, more than all the other Apostles, had been boasting of his unchangeable fidelity. What a fall, how shameful a weakness!

APPLICATION.— The fall of St. Peter shows us how weak is human nature, and makes us tremble for ourselves. But every effect has a cause; therefore let us look into what caused the Apostle's fall. The Fathers give four reasons for it. He was presumptuous of his own strength, he had neglected prayer and vigil with his Master, he was rash in exposing himself to temptation, and he indulged tepidity and idle curiosity. "Peter followed Him afar off, and sat with the servants to see the end." When we think over our falls, and the false steps we have taken in life, we may easily trace them to one or other of these causes.

AFFECTIONS.— Humbly beg of our Lord that the experience of the past may preserve you against future errors. Thank Him for having raised you from a state of sin.

RESOLUTIONS.— To guard against that passion or inclination which most frequently leads you into sin. Ask grace to discover and overcome it.

POINT II

“ And again he denied with an oath, That I know not the man.”
(St. Matt. 26:72.)

CONSIDERATION.— As the danger increased, St. Peter's fear grew stronger, and he fell lower still. His first denial had been a cowardly falsehood uttered against his convictions and the sentiments of his heart; to his second, he added perjury. His falls followed fast upon each other, and became more and more grievous.

APPLICATION.— It is the course which passion follows. If once we give way to our passions, once yield to human respect, gluttony, curiosity, anger, sensuality, or any other sin, we shall soon be carried farther. Never let us venture to say, I will do what I wish for this once, and then I shall be at rest; or, I will go thus far in what is wrong, but no farther. This is a fatal delusion, and springs from a want of self-knowledge. The passions are like fire, which never says, “ It is enough.” So said St. Austin, speaking from experience. And can we not confirm it?

AFFECTIONS.— In the presence of God, lament your blindness and the many sins of which you have been guilty.

RESOLUTIONS.— To resist promptly and energetically the first approaches of sin.

POINT III

"And after a while, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them: for thou art also a Galilean. But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom you speak." (St. Mark 14: 70, 71.)

CONSIDERATION.— Rapid and fearful was the Apostle's downward course. In less than two hours he thrice denied his Lord, twice he perjured himself; and finally confirmed his false-swearing by a fearful imprecation on himself. What shame and grief he then gave to the heart of his Master, who at that very moment was standing only a little way off, enduring cruel insults for love of him!

APPLICATION.— Here we are tempted to ask why our Lord permitted him who was to become the head of the Church to fall so low? And why was it published to the whole world in the gospel? It was, we may believe, say interpreters, in the first place, that St. Peter and his successors, the chief pastors of the Church, should excel in humility, and have a deep sympathy for the weakness of their people. Secondly, that the world, perceiving on what a weak foundation in itself the Catholic Church is built should recognize that it is indeed the work of God, not of men, and that its existence is a wonder and a marvel. Thirdly, as a warning to men, that, no matter to what height of sanctity they have attained, they are still very weak, and stand in continual need of Divine grace. Let us admire and adore the wisdom of Divine Counsel.

COLLOQUY with St. Peter, who, overwhelmed by fear, lost the power of reflection, and forgot the promises of fidelity and devotion which he had made only a few hours before.

REPENTANCE AND CONVERSION

OF ST. PETER

1st Prel. Look at the Apostle St. Peter weeping over his sin.*2d Prel.* Beg for the grace of true contrition.

POINT I

"And the Lord, turning, looked on Peter." (St. Luke 22: 61.)

CONSIDERATION.—How inexpressibly great was the goodness of our blessed Lord! He was in the midst of His sufferings; horrible insults and blasphemies were being poured upon Him; but He forgot Himself, and thought only of His faithless disciple. That unhappy fall of St. Peter's had touched Him more than all His own injuries. "*Respexit Petrum.*" "The Lord turning," says the gospel, "looked upon Peter." (St. Luke 22: 61.) It was a glance of mingled reproach and mercy, which was to be the means of his repentance and conversion.

APPLICATION.—And day by day this same goodness of our Lord is manifested toward numbers of poor sinners. He prevents them by His grace. He looks mercifully on them, dealing with them as He did with the penitent King David when he cried out, "*Respice in me, Domine, et miserere mei.*" "Look Thou upon me, and have mercy on me." (Ps. 24: 16.) Terror had so completely taken possession of St. Peter in the hall of Caiphas, that it had blinded him to the extent of his sin. Our Lord came to his assistance, and opened his eyes; and from that day forward, his gratitude to his loving Saviour was fervent and continual. If we think over our past sins, we shall recollect how often grace has saved us, and roused us from the sleep of death. Deep, then, ought to be our gratitude.

AFFECTIONS.— Aspirations of a grateful and devoted heart.

RESOLUTIONS.— To have recourse to prayer immediately on falling into sin, that we may not sleep in death.

POINT II

“Peter remembered the word that Jesus had said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt thrice deny me.” (St. Mark 14: 72.)

CONSIDERATION.— Sudden and wonderful was the change which one look from Jesus wrought in the heart of the faithless disciple. In an instant the darkness which encompassed his soul disappeared; he saw clearly the greatness of his sin; he remembered all his Master's forewarnings at the Last Supper and in the Garden of Olives; and his heart was filled, not with despair, but with the deepest contrition. He was transformed into the model of a true penitent.

APPLICATION.— Wonderful, indeed, is the work of grace! Silently it penetrates into the soul, enlightening and strengthening it, showing it the instability of creatures, the guilt and horror of sin, filling it with a deep and salutary contrition. It makes the sinner shed tears of mingled grief, love, and joy; it purifies the soul from all unruly affections; disengages it from the world, and draws it upward to God.

AFFECTIONS.— O inestimable gift of grace! replenish me betimes with thy consolations, lest my soul faint through weariness and dryness of mind. (*Imitation of Christ*, III. Book, lv.)

RESOLUTIONS.— To pray frequently for the assistance of Divine grace.

POINT III

“And going forth, he wept bitterly.” (St. Matt. 26:75.)

CONSIDERATION.—The fall of St. Peter had been grievous and scandalous, and his repentance was generous and edifying. Without a moment's delay, he fled from the place and the company which had occasioned his fall; and when alone, he began to shed those bitter tears which will not cease till his death. He mourned over the humiliation of his fall, the thought of his ingratitude, the grief and pain he had given to his Divine Master at the very moment when He was manifesting His love for him. Not only did our Blessed Lord pardon His penitent disciple, but He restored all the privileges which had been granted to him before his fall.

APPLICATION.—If we, like the Apostle, have been unfaithful, let us also imitate him in his repentance. The remembrance of our past ingratitude, and of God's goodness to us, should inspire us with deeper humility, more steadfast trust, and an unbounded generosity in works of charity; and thus, with the help of God's grace, we shall be enabled to bring good out of evil.

COLLOQUY with the penitent Apostle. Unite with him in extolling the boundless mercy of the heart of Jesus. Say often — particularly after the evening examination — “Lord Jesus! I ask Thy pardon for the numerous imperfections of my thoughts, words, actions, and intentions; but yet more do I thank Thee for the many graces Thou hast conferred on me. The measure of Thy mercies exceeds even that of my iniquities.”

JESUS DELIVERED BY HIS PEOPLE

TO PONTIUS PILATE, THE ROMAN GOVERNOR

1st Prel. Look at our Divine Lord passing along with His hands bound, amidst the hooting multitude, toward the palace of the Roman governor.

2d Prel. Beg for a more fervent love of your blessed Saviour.

POINT I

“And when morning was come, all the chief priests and ancients of the people took counsel against Jesus, that they might put Him to death.” (St. Matt. 27: 1.)

CONSIDERATION.—Hastily and eagerly, before the day broke, the unjust judges roused themselves from sleep, and assembled together. Their only motive was to satisfy their hatred against their innocent Victim, and to carry out their plan for putting Him to death. How diligent they were to accomplish their terrible crime!

APPLICATION.—We ought to blush with shame when we see how much more earnest these wicked men were in doing evil than we often are in doing good. They were much more ready to rise early that they might take counsel how to put Jesus to death than we are that we may give Him glory by our prayer and by our visits to the Sacrament of His love.

AFFECTIONS.—Acknowledge with shame that you are often less earnest and generous in the practice of virtue than are the wicked in the pursuit of sin. This consideration should awaken within you a lively feeling of self-reproach.

RESOLUTIONS.—We should strive earnestly to overcome sensuality, the parent of spiritual sloth, and the main cause of our infidelity.

POINT II

"And they brought Him bound, and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate, the governor." (St. Matt. 27: 2.)

CONSIDERATION.— It was His own people who rejected our Lord, and delivered Him to the Gentiles; those very people on whom He had poured so many blessings, and who had cried out, in wonder at His gracious miracles, "He hath done all things well: He hath made both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak." (St. Mark 7: 37.) Great indeed was their treachery and ingratitude; and what an additional humiliation and grief this must have been to our Divine Lord!

APPLICATION.— There is not a heart which does not swell with indignation at the remembrance of the treacherous ingratitude of the Jews; but are not many Christians equally wicked, when, by sacrilegious Communions, they deliver Jesus Christ to the evil one, who reigns over their hearts; and when, by their sins, they daily return evil for good to that loving Saviour from whom they have received a thousand times more graces and favors than did the Jews?

AFFECTIONS.— Let us lament, at the feet of Jesus, the acts of sacrilege committed by those whom baptism has constituted His adopted children. Let us also lament our own ingratitude and inconstancy.

RESOLUTIONS.— Renew your promises of love and devotion to our Lord, together with your baptismal or religious vows.

POINT III

"They went not into the hall, that they might not be defiled."
(St. John 18:28.)

CONSIDERATION.—How astonishing were the false consciences and blindness of these men! They were well instructed in their religion, yet they demurred about contracting a legal stain by entering the house of a heathen, and were not afraid to indulge their envy and hatred by conspiring against the life of an innocent man.

APPLICATION.—Are there not many people, and those even in religious life, who scrupulously observe indifferent matters, and who either neglect, or seldom attend to, essential ones; who are faithful to certain self-chosen pious practices, but who do not mind omitting their obligations? Are there not others also who pique themselves on their regularity in exteriors, whilst they neglect interior matters? Are not all these people misled by a false conscience? Have we nothing to reproach ourselves with on these heads? Let us make a detailed and careful examination of conscience.

COLLOQUY with Jesus, giving expression to the feelings, desires, and fears which have arisen in your heart.

THE DESPAIR AND DEATH OF JUDAS

1st *Prel.* Look at Judas throwing down the thirty shekels of silver before the chief priests.

2d *Prel.* Beg the grace of never giving way to temptations of despair or despondency.

POINT I

"Then Judas, who betrayed Him, seeing that He was condemned, repenting himself, brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and ancients." (St. Matt. 27: 3.)

CONSIDERATION.—When Judas agreed to betray his Divine Master for thirty pieces of silver, he expected that, being God as well as man, He would deliver Himself from the hands of His enemies, as He had often done before; but finding that his avaricious plan was defeated, and that Jesus gave Himself up and was about to suffer death, he was overwhelmed with horror at the thought of his crime, and of the eternal shame that would rest on him. The much coveted money pressed on his conscience with a crushing weight; and cursing it from his heart, he took it back to the chief priests who had given it to him.

APPLICATION.—Such is the ordinary result of sin. Before we commit it, we only see the pleasant side, and we are blind to its consequences; but as soon as the harm is done, then come remorse and shame, then we are horrified at our folly, and instead of enjoyment, we find it has brought us nothing but misery and regret. And this is equally true of lesser sins. What does our past experience teach us on this point?

AFFECTIONS.—At the feet of our Lord, acknowledge and lament your past blindness.

RESOLUTIONS.—Adopt as a rule of conduct the following sentence of the *Imitation*:

"It is then by resisting our passions, that we are to find true peace of heart, and not by being slaves to them." (I. Book, vi.)

POINT II

"Saying, I have sinned in betraying innocent blood. But they said, What is that to us? Look thou to it." (St. Matt. 27: 4.)

CONSIDERATION.— When Judas went to confess his sin to the high-priests, a sin to which they themselves had tempted him, he hoped they would be able to comfort him, or at least interest themselves in the matter; but he received no other reply than the scornful words, "What is that to us? look thou to it;" and when he heard it, the measure of his despair was filled up.

APPLICATION.— Never let us reckon on assistance or sympathy, or even esteem, from those whom we have served against our own conscience and the law of God. Outwardly, perhaps, they will praise or flatter us, but in their secret hearts they will condemn us for our weak and cowardly consent to what we know to be wrong.

AFFECTIONS.— Teach me, O Lord! to love and fear Thee alone, and to seek honor and happiness only in Thy service.

RESOLUTIONS.— Never to perform or omit any action through fear of men, nor, on the other hand, solely with the intention of pleasing them.

POINT III

"And casting down the pieces of silver in the Temple, he departed, and went and hanged himself." (Ibid.)

CONSIDERATION.— The terrible despair of Judas was the greatest of all his sins. His conviction that his

crime was unpardonable, was a virtual disbelief in God, who is infinite in all His attributes — in His mercy, as well as in His justice. The malice of man, which must be *finite*, can not equal, much less exceed, the *infinite* goodness of God. If Judas, like St. Peter, had thrown himself, humbled and contrite, at the feet of Jesus, he would also have been pardoned, and would, we may believe, have still been numbered amongst the Apostles.

APPLICATION.— We are all human, all liable to fall, and to fall very low. But if we unhappily commit sin, let us at once drive away all thoughts of despair, and imitate the humble repentance of St. Peter, trusting, as he did, in the omnipotent mercy of God. Then we shall share the glories of heaven with the penitents who have become saints; and, to strengthen our resolution, let us often say, with holy King David, “In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum.” “In Thee, O Lord! have I hoped; let me never be confounded.” (Psalm 30: 2.) And in times of temptation, let us remember those beautiful words of St. Austin, “If you feel afraid of God, throw yourself into His bosom.”

COLLOQUY with our Father in heaven, who, from the summit of His Omnipotence, invites sinners to have recourse to His infinite mercy and clemency.

JESUS ACCUSED BY HIS PEOPLE

BEFORE PILATE

1st Prel. Behold the crowd of people assembled before Pilate's palace, vociferating against Jesus.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to enable you to support false imputations in a Christian spirit.

POINT I

"Pilate therefore went out to them, and said, What accusation bring you against this man? They answered and said to him, If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up to thee." (St. John 18: 29, 30.)

CONSIDERATION.—We can not but feel great indignation when we see the rulers of the Jews instigating the crowd to accuse Jesus, their Messiah, of a crime, and to hate Him; He who had never harmed any one, but who had shed blessings around Him at every step. They were indeed filling up the measure of their ingratitude and unbelief.

APPLICATION.—This frightful picture is daily reproduced before our eyes. Our Lord and His holy faith are still hated, still calumniated, and often by those upon whom His best gifts have been bestowed; those whose rank and talents have raised them above their fellow-creatures, but who only use their superiority to mislead their inferiors, and stir them up against our Lord, and against His Church. We should not, however, have bitter feelings toward them, but rather pity them; for the longer their punishment is delayed, the greater it will be.

AFFECTIONS.—Let us pray for the conversion of our persecutors; and for ourselves, the grace to suffer willingly for the love of God.

RESOLUTIONS.—To endeavor to increase in zeal, confidence, and fervor, as the times become more disturbed, and troubles gather around us.

POINT II

“Pilate therefore said to them, Take Him you and judge Him according to your law. The Jews therefore said to him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.” (St. John 18: 31.)

CONSIDERATION.—The Scribes and Pharisees were the accusers of our Lord, but they would not pass sentence on Him, even when Pilate authorized them. They wanted to make Him appear more guilty in the eyes of the people by receiving His condemnation from the chief magistrate; they wanted to avert the odium of His death from themselves, and they wanted Him to be crucified, the most shameful and most cruel mode of death, and commonly used by the Romans, but seldom by the Jews, not being decreed by any of their laws; and so, under a pretense of justice, they hypocritically hid their wickedness. Without knowing or intending it, they were fulfilling prophecy, and bringing the designs of our merciful Lord to pass. He had foretold the manner of His death, and for love of us was willing to drink the cup of suffering and humiliation to the very dregs. Thus does God dispose all things, that even out of evil good may come.

APPLICATION.—Such are and always will be the dealings of Divine Providence. Let us never give way to distrust, or waver in our faith when we see the wicked obtain a momentary triumph, and succeed in their evil designs. God, who in His infinite wisdom orders the whole course of circumstances, will turn all things to His own glory and the good of His Church.

AFFECTIONS.— Adore and bless the impenetrable designs of God, even in the injuries inflicted on us, with His permission, by the wicked.

RESOLUTIONS.— To consider in the light of faith, and in a Christian and edifying spirit, the events which agitate the world, and disturb the peace of the Church.

POINT III

“And they began to accuse Him, saying, We have found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, and saying that He is Christ the King.” (St. Luke 23: 2.)

CONSIDERATION.— Three especial accusations were brought against Jesus: they accused Him of perverting the people, of leading them to refuse to pay tribute, and of assuming the name of Christ the King. The first two were notoriously false; for He had preached and practiced exactly the contrary; the third was false also in the sense in which they meant it — in the sense of an earthly kingdom, in opposition to that of Cæsar. It was the height of shameless insolence to utter such calumnies against the innocent in the presence of the chief magistrate of the nation.

APPLICATION.— If our Lord was willing to become the victim of wicked calumny without defending Himself, or even being disturbed by it, should we not make little account of men's judgment, when our own conscience tells us we have acted rightly? Have we profited by the lessons of our Divine Master? In what particular should we correct ourselves?

COLLOQUY with the ever-blessed Virgin, who witnessed the accusation of her Divine Son. Here as elsewhere, the **AFFECTIONS** and **RESOLUTIONS** of the preceding Points will furnish ample subject for the Colloquy.

MOTIVES FOR PENANCE

DERIVED FROM THE THOUGHT OF THE LOSS WHICH
THE SINNER INCURS

1st Prel. Imagine you see St. John the Evangelist writing to the church of Laodicea, "Be zealous, therefore, and do penance." (Apoc. 3:19.)

2d Prel. Beg grace to enable you to make reparation for the past by abundant penance.

POINT I

CONSIDERATION.—By mortal sin we lose God's friendship, sanctifying grace, a right to the beatific vision, and to the eternal possession of God — inestimable favors which we received in Baptism. In a state of mortal sin we are God's enemies, children and slaves of the devil, and, like the devil, accursed. Perhaps we have spent days in this miserable state; perhaps even a great part of our lives. The thought of this is a bitter one, and caused such deep grief to St. Austin that his only consolation was to immolate himself daily, by constant penance, on the altar of the love of God.

APPLICATION.—During these days of universal penance, let us imitate the Saint; and if God's mercy has preserved us from frequent mortal sin, let us think of those countless venial sins which give us sufficient cause for penance; for if venial sin does not deprive us of God's friendship, it certainly diminishes it. Every venial sin deprives us of a measure of God's love, and of a corresponding degree of glory in heaven. If we try to number our venial sins, we shall see how large a measure of grace we have lost, and what a loss it has been. Let us hasten, as far as lies in our power, to make reparation for it by fervent penance.

AFFECTIONS.— Pray earnestly for the spirit of penance.

RESOLUTIONS.— To practice generously during this week, the different methods of penance indicated on the first Monday of Lent.

POINT II

CONSIDERATION.— Mortal sin, in the second place, deprives our soul of supernatural life. That life consists in our union with God by the bonds of love. Mortal sin breaks this tie, interrupts this union; and while separated from God, the soul is like a dead body — incapable of an action meritorious of eternal life. Our best works are dead; every day, every month, passed in this state, is lost for all eternity.

APPLICATION.— Would that our eyes were enlightened by the bright beams of faith, so that we could really understand and calculate the amount we have already lost! for we should then most earnestly try by penance to regain at least a portion of it. Venial sin does not *destroy* this supernatural life, but it weakens it; the soul is less fruitful in good works; and these works are less pleasing to God, less meritorious. Moreover, our human imperfection is so great that our best works are always marred by it, and lose somewhat of their merit. The Saints tried to compensate for all this by great penance, and by constant mortification. Ought we not to imitate them, we who have sinned so much, and repented so little?

AFFECTIONS and RESOLUTIONS.— As in the preceding Point.

POINT III

CONSIDERATION.—Mortal sin, in the third place, robs the soul of its beauty, and renders it odious in the eyes of God and His holy angels, as say the Scriptures, “Abominabiles facti sunt.” “They are become abominable.” (Psalm 13: 1.) One mortal sin changed an angel into a demon, and cast him down from heaven to hell. How, then, must a soul, defiled by numerous mortal sins, appear in the eyes of God? What will be its destiny in eternity, when the punishment will be in proportion to the sins committed?

APPLICATION.—Perhaps you have incurred this penalty; and if so, you have a strong motive to induce you to embrace hardship and penance, and persevere therein unto the end. For, after all, although it may be certain that you have sinned grievously, yet it is not equally certain that your penance has been sufficient. The Church also tells us that the slightest venial fault leaves a stain upon the soul; and that “nothing defiled can enter heaven,” are the words of the Holy Ghost. We have daily stained our souls, and made few efforts to cleanse them; therefore our purgatory and our exclusion from heaven will last much longer. Ponder deeply upon this; if we could but understand what it is to endure the pain of purgatory for one moment, what it is for one moment to be deprived of the beatific vision, the utmost rigor of penance would seem light to us.

COLLOQUY with the Blessed Virgin, whom we justly venerate as the *Refuge of sinners, the Help of Christians.*

INTERROGATION OF JESUS

AT PILATE'S JUDGMENT-SEAT

1st Prel. Behold Jesus Christ, firm yet submissive, before the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate.

2d Prel. Beg for grace to make this meditation well.

POINT I

"Pilate therefore went into the hall again, and called Jesus, and said to Him, Art Thou the King of the Jews? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would certainly strive that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now my kingdom is not from hence." (St. John 18: 33, 36.)

CONSIDERATION.— Jesus Christ was not King of the Jews, nor of this world, in the ordinary sense of the world: this was not His will. His kingdom is the Church, the assembly of all those who willingly follow His teaching and observe His laws. The Church is in the world, but not of it. She came down from heaven, and earth is but the place of her pilgrimage and of her trials. She will return to heaven, and there the glorious and everlasting kingdom of Jesus and His disciples shall last forever. This was the kingdom He meant when He said to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world;" and again, when He says to His disciples, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God."

APPLICATION.— How great is our happiness in being made, by holy Baptism, children of the Church and subjects of Jesus Christ, and, by professing the Christian faith, to be among the number of the elect! If we choose, the kingdom of heaven is ours. What is requisite to secure it to us? That we should be full of the spirit of our Holy Mother the Church; that though *in* the world, we be not *of* the world: thus our life

should be more celestial than terrestrial; thus we should live in spirit in heaven, as the Apostle says, "*Nostra autem conversatio in coelis est.*" "Our conversation is in heaven." (Philip. 3: 20.)

AFFECTIONS.—*Thy kingdom come.* Reign now, O Lord! in our hearts, that we may reign eternally with Thee in heaven.

RESOLUTIONS.—To disengage yourself daily more and more from all earthly affections.

POINT II

"Pilate therefore said to Him, Art Thou a king, then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. For this was I born, and for this I came into the world; that I should give testimony to the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." (St. John 18: 37.)

CONSIDERATION.—Pilate's conduct gives us a striking example of human instability. He was really desirous to know the truth concerning the wonderful Being whom the world thought of in such different ways, and who was now before him; and this desire increased after he had heard Him say, "For this came I into the world; that I should give testimony to the truth." Naturally he asked, "What is truth?" It was to be expected that he would await the reply with eager curiosity; but it was not so. Pilate quitted the judgment-hall abruptly, and waited not to receive an answer to his question.

APPLICATION.—We justly condemn the weakness and vacillation of Pilate; but let us examine if our conduct be not in some degree similar to his. Before beginning some of our actions, or deciding in difficult circumstances, we are accustomed to invoke the Holy Ghost, "*Veni, Sancte Spiritus,*" "*Come, Holy Ghost,*" thus entreating to know His will; but do we not often decide hastily without recollecting ourselves sufficiently to hear His reply? and do we not often hear the voice

of God in our souls, and pay no attention to it? Do we not thus imitate the inconsistency of the Roman judge?

AFFECTIONS.— With shame and confusion, confess your unworthiness before God.

RESOLUTIONS.— Be earnest in prayer, and in invoking the Holy Spirit, saying with Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." (1. Kings 3: 10.)

POINT III

"He went out again to the Jews, and saith to them, I find no cause in Him." (St. John 18: 38.)

CONSIDERATION.— Pilate, a wise and experienced man, at the first sight of the case felt sure the crimes alleged could not be proved. However, in his position as judge, he questioned the accused upon the nature of the kingdom that He claimed. The answers of Jesus showed him clearly that His kingdom was not in opposition to the rulers of this world; and he therefore pronounced Him to be innocent, saying, "I find no cause in Him."

APPLICATION.— Pilate, though vacillating, was upright, and a lover of truth. If he had been as firm as he was upright, he would never have condemned Jesus to death. But he feared to be disgraced, and he grew weak and timid. The Jews craftily worked upon his fears, and extorted from him the most unjust of sentences. This is the devil's way with us: he studies our weak points, and takes advantage of them; and if we are off our guard, he entraps us with subtle snares. By prayer and vigilance render his artifices useless. In the morning, foresee *when* and *where* you shall be most exposed to the danger of failing, and take resolutions and ask for grace accordingly.

COLLOQUY with Jesus our Divine Master and Model

THE WONDERFUL SILENCE

OF JESUS BEFORE PILATE'S JUDGMENT-SEAT

1st Prel. Behold Jesus standing calm and silent in the midst of the clamor and accusations of the people who were stirred up against Him.

2d Prel. Beg for grace faithfully to imitate the great example which our Lord then gave us.

POINT I

"And when He was accused by the chief priests and ancients, He answered nothing." (St. Matt. 27:12.)

CONSIDERATION.—The first accusations which the Jews brought were so vague and untruthful that Pilate rejected them, and declared our Lord's innocence. It was beneath our Lord's dignity to reply to some of the points which really added nothing to the first accusations, and besides, the sanctity of His life answered for Him, not only confounding His calumniators, but proving His Divinity. He did indeed try to hide it under His humanity, but it was revealed by His answers to the judge.

APPLICATION.—Happy is the religious whose conduct is an unanswerable defense against the false accusations of the wicked and envious! Happier still if his conscience bears witness to his constant endeavor to be spotless before God. Are we among this happy number?

AFFECTIONS.—Let my heart be undefiled before Thee, O Lord! and I will not fear what man can do unto me. (Psalm 118:80; 117:6.)

RESOLUTIONS.—To attend to the practice of solid virtue.

POINT II

"Then Pilate saith to him, Dost thou not hear how great testimonies they allege against thee? And He answered him to never a word, so that the governor wondered exceedingly." (St. Matt. 27: 13, 14.)

CONSIDERATION.— The astonishment of Pilate was not surprising. What would seem more natural for an accused man standing before a tribunal from which there was no appeal, and whose death was eagerly sought after, than to defend himself, and exert every effort to declare his innocence, especially when called upon to do so by a judge favorable to his cause? But Jesus was silent. He who often by a single word had confounded His enemies and turned the anger of the people against them, now would not utter one. Pilate could not understand the calm dignity of our Lord's silence, seeing clearly that it did not proceed from pride or resentment.

APPLICATION.— We are better off than Pilate, for we know why our Blessed Lord kept that heroic silence. He was determined to die for us; and having manifested the truth, He would not say a single word to save His own life. And also, He chose by this painful silence to expiate our sins of the tongue, and to teach us to control our desire of answering our superiors haughtily when they reprove us, or our wish to give a sharp and angry retort to those who wound our feelings, or injure us in any way.

AFFECTIONS.— Acts of admiration and gratitude to our Lord. Ask His pardon for having been so unfaithful in following His example.

RESOLUTIONS.— Examine yourself with regard to sins of speech, and resolve to avoid them.

POINT III

"But they were more earnest, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place." (St. Luke 23:5.)

CONSIDERATION.—When Pilate had seen and acknowledged that the accused was innocent, his duty was to silence the accusers, and dismiss them with the contempt they deserved. But this he dared not do. The Jews, perceiving his weakness, tried to take advantage of it. They began to clamor and importune him to grant the request which was against his conscience; and they succeeded only too well.

APPLICATION.—Our great enemy the devil acts in the same way toward us: as soon as he sees us hesitating between God and creatures, or conscience and our passions, he takes advantage of our weakness, and grows bolder than ever. He pours his arguments into our ears, terrifies us with the sight of imaginary difficulties, and lets us have no peace till we consent to sin. Let us, then, taught by Pilate's example, be on our guard against our own weakness, let us dread making the slightest concession to the tempter, and vigorously resist his first suggestions, arming ourselves, as the Apostle says, with the shield of faith and with prayer.

COLLOQUY * with Jesus Christ who became for us the "outcast of the people." (Psalm 21:7.)

* You should read over, from time to time, the foregoing remarks on the *Colloquies*, *Resolutions*, and *Affections*.

JESUS INSULTED IN THE COURT OF HEROD

1st Prel. Let us picture to ourselves Jesus reviled and insulted, and treated as a fool in Herod's court.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to understand the value of insults endured for the love of Christ.

POINT I

"And when he understood that he was of Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him away to Herod, who was also himself at Jerusalem in those days. And Herod, seeing Jesus, was very glad: for he was desirous of a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things of Him; and he hoped to see some sign wrought by Him." (St. Luke 23:7, 8.)

CONSIDERATION.—Herod was a vain and degraded man; he had put St. John the Baptist to death; and he wanted the Saviour of the world, of whom he had heard so much, to work a miracle before him, not that he might be touched and converted, but simply to gratify his vanity and curiosity. But God does not grant extraordinary graces to such men as these. He reserves them for the humble, who deem themselves unworthy of them. He delights to pour them on those who are emptied of self, dead to self-love, seeking only His greater glory. These souls ask for extraordinary graces or miracles only that they may serve Him better, or gain others to His service.

APPLICATION.—The reason why we receive so few extraordinary graces is, that we either lack these dispositions altogether, or have made little progress in them; and after having perhaps passed many years in our holy vocation, we are very unlike those who, *mighty in word and work*, had the same vocation, and of whom wonderful things are recorded.

AFFECTIONS.— Beg for light to know the most secret dispositions of your heart. . . Renounce before God all voluntary thoughts and deliberate feelings of vanity and self-love.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will endeavor daily more and more to die to myself, and to see only God in all things.

POINT II

“And he questioned Him in many words; but He answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood by, earnestly accusing Him.” (St. Luke 23: 9, 10.)

CONSIDERATION.— Wonderful indeed was the silence and passiveness of our Divine Lord before the tribunal of Herod, to which His cause was referred. He was accused of greater crimes still, but His accusers so outwitted themselves that He could in a few words have confounded them, and turned the tide in His favor. Yet He held His peace. He went there to receive a sentence for life or death, and if He had chosen to work a miracle at Herod's desire, He would have found protection; but He would work none. It is in reality a greater miracle to triumph thus completely over every human feelings than to raise the dead; but the world, like the court of Herod, can not appreciate a miracle of this kind. It sees in it nothing but stupidity and helplessness, and treats him who works it as a mere simpleton.

APPLICATION.— Our Lord kept silence to punish Herod's pride and to teach us to mortify ours. Our pride is our greatest trial; and as it were in spite of ourselves, it makes us desire esteem, notice, praise, and applause from men, especially from the great ones of the earth. Have we fought steadfastly and victoriously against this unruly passion of pride?

AFFECTIONS.—Praise, bless, and thank our Lord for the example and encouragement He gives you. Pray for grace to imitate Him.

RESOLUTIONS.—To receive unmerited reproach in silence, and with meekness and patience.

POINT III

“And Herod with his army set Him at naught, and mocked Him, putting on Him a white garment, and sent Him back to Pilate.” (St. Luke 23: 11.)

CONSIDERATION.—Let us contemplate Jesus, the King of glory, the eternal Wisdom, treated at the court of Herod as a senseless idiot; let us follow Him in spirit, wearing the fool’s robe, through the streets of Jerusalem, amidst the jeerings of the populace and the immense crowd of strangers which the Paschal feast had brought into the city, and we shall see that the prophecy of Jeremiah was fulfilled to the very letter, “Factus sum in derisum omni populo.” “I am made a derision to all my people.” (Lament. 3: 14.)

APPLICATION.—That meditation may produce great fruit in us. Let us contemplate Jesus Christ as the true way, which leads us unto life, as the living model of perfection. Let us enkindle in our hearts an ardent desire to become like unto Him, to serve Him willingly, to be ready, in imitation of Him and for His love, to be despised, insulted, reviled, and even looked upon as a fool by the enemies of God and of His Church; without, however, giving grounds, by our conduct, for such a supposition. This is the *foolishness of the Cross*. Many of God’s servants have traveled by this road; why should not we follow in their footsteps?

COLLOQUY with the Blessed Virgin who suffered in her own person all the insults offered to her Divine Son.

BARABBAS COMPARED WITH AND PREFERRED TO JESUS

1st Prel. Behold our Divine Lord before all the people compared with a notorious criminal.

2d Prel. Beg for grace never to hesitate between the Creator and the creature.

POINT I

“They therefore being gathered together, Pilate said, Whom will you that I release to you: Barabbas, or Jesus that is called Christ?” (St. Matt. 27: 17.)

CONSIDERATION.— Pilate knew and acknowledged the innocence of our Lord; it was against his conscience to condemn Him; but his self-interest bade him gratify the Jews; else he would lose favor in the eyes of Cæsar. Conscience being on the one hand, and interest on the other, he tried to get out of the difficulty. He sent Him to Herod, not being able to find out what He was guilty of; then he offered the people their choice between an odious criminal and the Saviour, whom till lately they had revered so much. But his plans proved futile, and after some further attempts, which were all useless, always shrinking back from doing his duty, he completed his evil work by condemning the innocent, and ruining himself.

APPLICATION.— How true are those words of our Lord’s, “No man can serve two masters.” (St. Matt. 6: 24.) It is impossible to steer a middle course between God and the world; between virtue and passion, no matter how slight it may be. A friendship which is inordinate, though it may be springing perhaps from motives of zeal, causes us perplexity and trouble of conscience. Our own good sense and our confessor tell us to decide at once to give it entirely up. But we answer, No, you expect too much; but I will be more careful for the future. This is but one of many exam-

ples that might be adduced. This is a delusion of self-love which leads to nothing. What does our experience tell us on this head?

AFFECTIONS.— Beg for grace to be able to say always with truth, “My God, I love Thee with all my heart,” with an undivided and unwavering love.

RESOLUTIONS.— To apply to the practice of perfection the maxim current in the world: Half-measures effect no cures, neither do they gain battles. Nothing great is accomplished by means of them.

POINT II

“But the chief priests and ancients persuaded the people that they should ask Barabbas, and make Jesus away. But the whole multitude together cried out, saying, Away with this man! and release unto us Barabbas.” (St. Matt. 27: 20; St. Luke 23: 18.)

CONSIDERATION.— Let us try to understand as far as we can the extent to which the insults of Jesus were carried. He is placed on a level, or, as we say, weighed in the balance, with Barabbas, the greatest criminal then in the prisons of Judea, by the chief magistrate, before all the people; and to the astonishment even of Pilate, Barabbas was preferred to Jesus by unanimous consent. All, says holy writ, with one voice cried, “Not this man, but Barabbas.”

APPLICATION.— Who among us, then, can dare to complain that he is not treated as he deserves; that others are preferred to him; that he is put last of all? If we remember how often in past life we have imitated the Jews by allowing sin to reign in our hearts, rather than God our Saviour, we shall count ourselves unworthy of a place in God’s house, and still more unworthy of the meanest office therein.

AFFECTIONS in conformity with these reflections.

RESOLUTIONS.— To consider ourselves entitled only to what is meanest and lowest in the community.

POINT III

“And as he was sitting in the place of judgment, his wife sent to him; saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him.” (St. Matt. 27: 19.)

CONSIDERATION.— Most interpreters believe that the uneasiness of Pilate’s wife was caused by an inspiration of grace, and that it obtained salvation for her. The Greeks even honor her as a saint, under the name of Claudia Procula. Be this as it may, the warning thus sent to Pilate was an extraordinary grace vouchsafed to him at the critical moment, when he was hesitating between doing a great act of justice, which might have won his salvation, and an atrocious crime, which brought fearful misery on him both in this world and the next; for we know that he fell into disgrace and was banished, and finally destroyed himself.

APPLICATION.— How many times and in how many ways have our guardian angels and our directors warned us and tried to strengthen us, when our passions had obtained such a mastery over us that our judgment was darkened, and we were hesitating between good and evil! All these warnings were extraordinary graces. How have we corresponded with them? how have we profited by them?

COLLOQUY with our Blessed Lord. Prostrate, and, as it were, annihilated in presence of His infinite majesty, let us entreat Him to receive us amongst His devoted and constant servants; too happy if He but grant us the lowest place in His house.

PILATE TRIES TO SAVE JESUS

FROM THE FURY OF THE JEWS

1st Prel. Imagine you see Pilate pleading with the crowd in behalf of Jesus.

2d Prel. Beg the grace to persevere till the end in your holy vocation.

POINT I

"Pilate saith to them, What shall I do, then, with Jesus, that is called Christ? They say all, Let Him be crucified." (St. Matt. 27: 22, 23.)

CONSIDERATION.—The efforts that Pilate made to rescue Jesus from His enemies only incensed them the more against Him. Of the three classes who were concerned in bringing about this death, Pilate, the people, and the priests, the last had the greatest guilt. Yielding to a base jealousy, they invented and sustained the accusations, they excited and seduced the people, they overpowered the judge by the cries of rage and fury which they put into the mouth of the crowd: their sin was very terrible; for the sanctity of their office, and the greater light and grace they had received, ought to have made them models to their people instead of a scandal.

APPLICATION.—Here is another melancholy proof of the truth of the ancient saying, *Corruptio optimi pessima* — The best when corrupted become the worst; and this we unhappily see too often in our own days, when priests or religious become infidels or apostates; they seem as if they wanted to deaden their own consciences, or entirely to efface the seal of their sacerdotal consecration or religious profession.

AFFECTIONS.— Beg of Jesus Christ to preserve you from ever abusing the graces of your holy vocation, from losing its spirit, or ceasing to esteem it. Ask that it may not be your lot to swell the number of those unhappy souls who, unfaithful to that holy vocation, have lost it, and losing it, have lost all.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will frequently declare before God my determination to relinquish all rather than forfeit the grace of my vocation.

POINT II

“The governor said to them, Why, what evil hath He done?”
(St. Matt. 27:23.)

CONSIDERATION.— This question ought to have opened the eyes of the Jewish people. It reminded them of the public life of Jesus, every part of which had brought down blessings on them. Even among this very multitude there might have been found many whom He had miraculously cured — to whom He had given sight, hearing, or the use of their limbs — and a still greater number whom He had delivered from the possession or temptations of the devil.

APPLICATION.— During the whole of our lives, and especially since we entered religion, we can remember nothing but wonderful graces and blessings; they constantly flash across our minds, and the memory of them ought to increase our love and devotion to Jesus, our Divine Lord. How is it, then, that we correspond so little with these graces, that we are so lukewarm in His service? Let us search into the causes of this, fight against it, and overcome it if possible.

AFFECTIONS.— Detest the monstrous ingratitude of the Jews, and lament before God the many instances in which your conduct has been similar to theirs.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will henceforward strive to serve God with increased generosity and fervor, and so to return Him love for love.

POINT III

“And he said to them the third time, I find no cause of death in Him. I will chastise Him, therefore, and let Him go.” (St. Luke 23: 22.)

CONSIDERATION.— Pilate was guilty of the grossest injustice. Three times had he declared that the prisoner brought before him was innocent, and yet he condemned Him to a cruel and shameful punishment. His aim was to save Him at least from death, by exciting compassion for His sufferings, under the punishment to which He was sentenced. He did not see that he was actually clearing the way for the death by crucifixion, which the Jews were aiming at, for it was often the custom to precede crucifixion by scourging.

APPLICATION.— How often have our passions made us act like fools! Have we not, from pride or sensuality, tried to escape the humiliations and mortifications which we ought to seek after, especially in religious life? or have we not sought for pleasures and distinctions which we knew well would do us harm? Are we, then, on our guard against our passions, and do we fight manfully against them?

COLLOQUY with our Divine Master and Model.

THE SCOURGING OF JESUS CHRIST

1st Prel. Behold our Lord Jesus Christ bound to the pillar.

2d Prel. Let us beg for the grace of making our meditations on our Lord's sufferings as fruitful as those of so many holy souls.

POINT I

THE PREPARATION FOR THE SCOURGING

CONSIDERATION.—“ Pilate took Jesus, and scourged Him.” (St. John 19: 1.) Our innocent Lord heard Himself sentenced to the humiliation and suffering of scourging. He was dragged to the place of punishment. He saw the preparations for it; and He felt all its horror by anticipation. How terrible must this fear and horror have been to His sensitive nature! But He never wavered in His purpose of bearing all for us, and He went resolutely forward.

APPLICATION.—How differently do we act! How often do we not only waver, but actually shrink back from carrying out our resolutions! And only because we are terrified by the anticipation (which generally exaggerates matters) of the trouble or suffering they would cost us; for instance, rising at the proper time in all seasons, doing such or such an act of penance or mortification, keeping to a certain position in prayer, or faithfully fulfilling a particular duty. Is not this true?

AFFECTIONS.—Yes, my Saviour, I confess with shame that fear alone has often withheld me from the combat.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will henceforth distrust my imagination which is always a bad guide where there is question of conquering natural inclinations. I will consult duty alone, and go steadily onward.

POINT II**THE SUFFERING OF THE SCOURGING**

CONSIDERATION.— The horror of this punishment is beyond the power of words to describe: but in order to realize it as far as possible, imagine yourself undergoing it: imagine your clothes torn off, yourself bound to the pillar, while strong men, armed some with whips, some with straps, some with cords, and iron spikes, scourge you till their arms drop with fatigue, until your body is but one wound, your flesh torn, and the ground covered with your blood. Then, perhaps, you may form some idea of the suffering of that scourging which your Divine Saviour endured for you.

APPLICATION.— In all your troubles, whether of mind or body, fix your eyes on Jesus your King, bound to the pillar; the sight of Him will make all your sufferings seem light, and you will bear them with courage and with love.

AFFECTIONS.— Compassion, love, gratitude, desire to suffer for and with Jesus.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will endeavor to put in practice the precept of the Apostle, “I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice,” perpetually immolated through labor and mortification. (Rom. 12: 1.)

POINT III

THE MOTIVES FOR THE SCOURGING

CONSIDERATION.—It was a cruel and cowardly expedient on Pilate's part to appease the people and to save Jesus from death. Our Lord bore it from His heroic love for us. He gave up His body into the hands of the executioners, that He might expiate, in His innocent flesh, the shameful and countless sins with which men of all ages and conditions have degraded, and do daily degrade, their bodies; sins by which they dishonor and trample under their feet the image of God, in whose likeness they were created.

APPLICATION.—Had I but once grievously offended against holy purity, I ought to say to myself, Here is my work! It is I who, by the hands of the executioners, have torn the body of Jesus, who have covered it with blood and wounds; and besides this, the memory of my frequent acts of self-indulgence ought to be sufficient to produce in me a deep compunction, a contempt of myself, and an ardent desire to labor and suffer much for the love of Him to whom I cause such bitter sufferings.

COLLOQUY with Jesus bound to the pillar. Renew the **AFFECTIONS** of the first and second **POINTS**. Offer yourself as a victim of expiation. Renew your good resolutions.

MOTIVES FOR PENANCE

INSPIRED BY THE THOUGHT OF DEATH *

1st Prel. Imagine you see a religious on his death-bed.*2d Prel.* Ask for grace to live the life of a penitent, that so you may die the death of a saint.

POINT I

PENANCE WILL STRENGTHEN THE DYING CHRISTIAN

CONSIDERATION.—Our truest consolation at the hour of death will be in having passed a life of penance. If we were to say to a dying religious, “Your last moment, my brother, is drawing near; all is ending for you in this world; but take comfort: you have borne an important part; you have held, one after another, the highest posts in your order; you have won a great name among learned men and among orators; your works and your writings will keep your name alive;” do you think it would give him much comfort? No, indeed; he would answer you, “What will all this avail me in eternity?” “*Quid hoc ad æternitatem?*” “I have been,” said a celebrated religious, when dying, “I have been superior in the largest houses of my order; I have been a popular and applauded preacher; and all of it is *nothing* to me now. I have faithfully kept my rule, and *that is something*; it is the only thing that consoles me in this awful moment.” “*Superior fui, nihil est; concionator fui, et nihil est; religiosus fui, et est aliquid!*”

APPLICATION.—The greatest comfort, then, we shall have on our death-beds is the knowledge that we have been true religious; that we have been crucified with Jesus to the world and to ourselves by continual mortification. “Yes,” says the author of the *Imitation*, “he shall be full of comfort and hope in his death, who in his life lived under the yoke of religious disci-

* See preface.

pline and self-abnegation." (1. Book, xxiii.) If I were to die now, should I find comfort in looking back on the past?

AFFECTIONS.—"Moriatur anima mea morte justorum." "Let my soul die the death of the just." (Num. 23: 10.) "Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur." "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." (Apoc. 14: 13.)

RESOLUTIONS.—To look back on the practices of penance which you imposed on yourself on the first Monday of Lent, and resume them with renewed fervor.

POINT II

PENANCE WILL ENCOURAGE THE DYING CHRISTIAN

CONSIDERATION.—When a good man is dying, he is not in fear and sorrow at the thought of leaving the fair things of this world, but only on account of his past sins, and of those words of the Holy Ghost, "De propitiato peccato noli esse sine metu." "Be not without fear about sin forgiven." (Eccl. 5: 5.) And again, "Nescit homo utrum amore an odio dignus sit." "Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred." (Eccl. 9: 1.) But what reassurance and what peace we can find in those other words of the Holy Spirit: "Dissimulas peccata hominum propter pœnitentiam." "Thou winkest at the sins of men for the sake of repentance." (Wisdom 11: 24.) The memory of having expiated by mortification the insult which sin is to God, of having paid off many debts due to Divine justice, by means of penance, will also comfort us. St. Hilarion was thus preserved from the fear of death. "What, my soul," said he, "thou hast carried the Cross for seventy years, and now dost thou fear to leave the world to appear before God?"

APPLICATION.—If we desire, when death is drawing near, to share the calm trust felt by the saints, even

those whose lives had not always been spotless, we should imitate their penance, and especially during this precious time of Lent, of which more than half has already passed. Let us be in earnest about it, and defer it not to the hour of sickness or the time of old age. "While you are in health," says Thomas à Kempis, "you can perform many works of satisfaction; but you know not what you will be able to do when sickness overtakes you." (I. Book, xxiii.)

AFFECTIONS and RESOLUTIONS, as in the preceding Point.

POINT III

PENANCE WILL BE THE JOY OF THE DYING RELIGIOUS

CONSIDERATION.—When the laborer joyfully gathers in a rich harvest, all his past labor seems as nothing; the joy and satisfaction of the result far outweigh his former trouble and privation.

APPLICATION.—This is an emblem of the joy and happiness which the penitent and mortified religious will feel when he is about to reap the fruits of all the austerities of the religious life, when he is on the point of receiving the reward promised by our Lord to those who renounce all worldly pleasures to bear the Cross after Him. And what will be his bliss when he shall have entered into the joy of his reward? St. Peter of Alcantara gives us some idea of it when, appearing in glory to St. Teresa, he said, "O blissful penance, which has purchased for me so great a reward!" In thoughts like these we shall find courage and strength to live and persevere unto the end in the practice of holy penance.

COLLOQUY with St. Peter of Alcantara, whose death was made happy by the recollection of the penance he had performed.

ON JESUS CROWNED WITH THORNS

AND LOADED WITH IGNOMINY

1st Prel. Behold our blessed Lord sitting on a block of wood holding a reed in His hand, His head crowned with thorns, and insulted by the guards of the Roman governor.

2d Prel. Beg for feelings of deep grief and compunction.

POINT I

THE INSULTS WHICH PRECEDED THE CROWNING WITH THORNS

CONSIDERATION.—The fearful sufferings of our Lord's scourging were followed by insults not less cruel. Pilate's soldiers, who had led Him to the court of Herod, were anxious that these insults should exceed those offered to Him there. He had there been treated as a fool; they would now crown Him as a fool, as the king of fools; as says holy writ, "taking Jesus into the hall, gathered together unto Him the whole band, and stripping Him, they put a scarlet cloak about Him, and plating a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head, and a reed in His right hand. And bowing the knee before Him, they mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And spitting on Him, they took the reed and struck His head, and they gave Him blows." (St. Matt. 27: 27-30; St. John 19: 3.)

APPLICATION.—If we carefully think over all the details, and even every word of this narrative, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we shall see how truly the prophet Jeremias had foretold of the Messiah, "Satiabitur opprobriis." "He shall be filled with reproaches." (Lament. 3: 30.) If we then ask ourselves, Who is it that is thus treated? for what reason? our hearts will surely burn with love.

AFFECTIONS.—Astonishment, compassion, love. Humble yourself in considering your sensitiveness. Desire to share in the insults endured for you by your Divine Saviour.

RESOLUTIONS.—Renew your determination to aim at acquiring the third degree of humility.

POINT II

THE TERRIBLE PAIN OF THE CROWNING WITH THORNS

CONSIDERATION.—“And plating a crown of thorns, they put it on His head.” They not only placed it on His head, but pressed it in, by striking Him on the head with a reed, as the Evangelist tells us. Conceive, if possible, the sufferings our Lord then endured. Why did He not sink beneath this additional torment, following so rapidly upon His scourging? Did He work a miracle to blunt the edge of His sufferings? No; but He exerted His miraculous power that He might not sink under sufferings which would have caused His death; so that no one else might ever suffer as He had done. And all this was for love of me!

APPLICATION.—It was the will of our Divine Lord that His head, which had escaped the scourging, should also bear its distinct punishment, that He might expiate our sins of thought—the many thoughts and desires of vanity, pride, ambition, rebellion, hatred, vengeance, impurity, and injustice with which the heads of men are filled, when they lose the recollection of the presence and justice of God.

AFFECTIONS.—Let us compassionate the cruel sufferings of Jesus, tortured for love of us, and ask His pardon for having contributed, by our sinful thoughts and intentions, to His sufferings.

RESOLUTIONS.—To aim at greater recollection, in

order the better to watch over our thoughts and restrain their wanderings.

POINT III

THE WONDERFUL PATIENCE OF JESUS

CONSIDERATION.— With what wonderful patience did our Blessed Lord bear these unparalleled insults and sufferings! His eyes were not bandaged now, as they were when, in Herod's court, they mocked Him as a prophet. He looked upon the insulting homage which one soldier after another offered Him in ridicule. He saw the spittle which they dared to throw in His face. He saw the arms of the insolent soldiers raised to strike Him; and yet He never moved His head to escape their blows. When they snatched the reed from His hand, He let them have it; when they gave it Him back again, He took it, fulfilling to the very letter the prophecy of Isaias, "I have not turned away my face from them that spit upon me." (Isaias 50:6.)

APPLICATION.— While we gaze upon this wonderful patience, we should remember our own impatience at the least contradiction. What ought we to think of our secret but eager desires for the praise and adulation of the world; of the resentment which enters and dwells in our hearts against those who have offended or looked down upon us? "If," says the author of the *Imitation*, "Jesus, covered with ignominy, was always before your minds, you would desire rather to be beneath the feet of all men, than to exercise superiority over any one." We should, then, ardently long to be despised, and suffer for the love of Jesus. How far have we advanced in thus following the true disciples of our Lord?

COLLOQUY with the holy Angels who witnessed the cruel sufferings and the fearful insults inflicted on our Divine Lord.

PILATE SHOWS JESUS TO THE PEOPLE, SAYING,

ECCE HOMO — BEHOLD THE MAN!

1st Prel. Behold our Lord Jesus covered with blood and wounds, crowned with thorns, wearing a purple mantle, and with a reed in His hand, exposed to the gaze of the multitude.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to give more love and glory to Jesus, because He was thus mocked and reviled.

POINT I

"Jesus, therefore, came forth, bearing the crown of thorns, and the purple garment: and he saith to them, 'Ecce Homo,' Behold the Man!" (St. John 19: 5.)

CONSIDERATION.— Even the heart of the Roman governor was touched when he beheld our Lord covered with blood and wounds, and insulted as a mocking king. He thought that the Jews would equally be moved at the sight, and would demand the liberation of Him whose death they had been clamoring for. With this intention, he brought Him forth to the front of the judgment-hall, and presenting Him to the people, said, "Behold the Man!"

APPLICATION.— Holy Church addresses these words, to every faithful soul, that they may have a tender compassion for the sufferings and humiliations of our Divine Lord. And God the Father also addresses them to us, that our hearts may be inflamed by love for His Divine Son, so shamefully treated for love of us; and ought we not to be moved even to tears when we know it was our sins which brought all this upon Him?

AFFECTIONS.—"O God, the Father of mercies! look upon the face of Thy Christ, and have mercy on me."
"Pater misericordiarum, Deus, respice in faciem Christi tui et miserere mei."

RESOLUTIONS.— Frequently recite this prayer dur-

ing Mass, at the elevation of the Sacred Host. Excite in your heart the desire of resembling Jesus Christ, ridiculed and despised by the world; or at least wish that you were capable of experiencing this desire.

POINT II

"When the chief priests and the servants had seen Him, they cried out, saying, Crucify Him, crucify Him!" (St. John 19: 6.)

CONSIDERATION.— When Pilate exposed Jesus to the gaze of the multitude, he thought it would be unnecessary to plead for Him in many words. He only said "Behold the Man!" and he imagined there would a universal cry for pardon and mercy. And doubtless this would have been the case, if he had not been dealing with a people excited by the implacable hatred of the priests and doctors. The pride and self-love of these men had been wounded, and they had sworn to have the life of Jesus; not afraid, by shedding innocent blood and the blood of a God, to draw down on themselves and their people fearful punishment. Pilate, to his astonishment, had no other answer than an outcry of rage, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!"

APPLICATION.— Here is an example to what lengths our passions, and especially wounded pride, will go. It blinded these clear-headed men to their own interests; it stifled all sense of justice and the fear of God in their breasts. And in the same way a religious, who is determined not to submit to his superiors, is indifferent to the loss of his vocation, the violation of his vows, and the detriment to his reputation. If he is told that those who have respected him as a religious will despise him as a rebel, he is unmoved. Remind him of the most touching or the most terrifying truths of religion, show him Jesus Christ humble and obedient

unto death, even the death of the Cross, it is all in vain. Passion never stops to reason; its victims are obstinately blind, and fall over the precipice. Would to God that this remark had not been verified, even in our own days, by melancholy instances of perversion!

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for grace to know and distrust yourself.

RESOLUTIONS.— To resist resolutely the first impressions and impulses of passion, particularly those of pride and sensuality.

POINT III

“ Pilate saith to them, Take Him you, and crucify Him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and according to the law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.” (St. John 19: 6, 7.)

CONSIDERATION.— The real crime of Jesus in the eyes of the priests and doctors was, that He had seen through their hypocrisy, and thrown them into the shade by the superiority of His teaching, the sanctity of His life, and the renown of His miracles. But they took good care not to bring this motive forward; for they were not willing to expose the base passion of envy which possessed them.

APPLICATION.— Such are the workings of our passions. We do not see the true motives of our actions, and we fasten upon the imaginary faults of others. A religious or a priest rebelling against obedience will tell you that the fault is all on the side of his superiors; that they are prejudiced, ignorant, and unjust; and that for his own honor's sake, and even in his zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, he is obliged to act as he does. In reality, wounded self-love is the foundation of it all. May God preserve us from becoming the victims of this passion!

COLLOQUY with Jesus, our Divine Master and Guide.

THE LAST EXAMINATION OF JESUS

AND THE WEAK TIMIDITY OF PILATE

1st Prel. Look at the meek but resolute countenance of Jesus as He stands before the faint-hearted and cowardly judge and the infuriated people.

2d Prel. Beg for grace never to give way to any fear but the fear of God.

POINT I

"He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore had heard this saying, he feared the more." (St. John 19:7, 8.)

CONSIDERATION.— This last accusation of the Jews. "He made Himself the Son of God," far from creating a belief in His guilt in the mind of the judge, only made him believe the mysterious truth, and filled him with fear. The words and demeanor of our Lord had already made him suspect His Divinity, not with that certainty which faith gives to us, but with such a conviction as a pagan could feel. Was it not natural that he should henceforth fear the vengeance of God?

APPLICATION.— Pilate was astonished and terrified at the thought that he might perhaps be standing in the presence of God, and about to commit a grievous crime against Him. He dared not take a single step further in the matter without inquiring into the truth of the assertion. And what have we done, who know and firmly believe that we are always in the presence of God, who searches the inmost recesses of our hearts? We have not been afraid to insult Him, to commit iniquity in His sight, to defy His terrors, even with the awful examples before us of His punishments.

AFFECTIONS.— Astonishment at the consideration of our rashness and blind folly.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will strive with greater diligence than ever to walk in the presence of God, and attend to the inspirations of conscience.

POINT II

“And he entered into the hall again, and he said to Jesus, Whence art Thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore saith to Him, Speakest Thou not to me? Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and I have power to release Thee? Jesus answered, Thou shouldst not have any power against me, unless it were given thee from above; therefore he that hath delivered me to thee hath the greater sin.” (St. John 19: 9-11.)

CONSIDERATION.— Pilate’s question was not about the birthplace of our Lord, for that he already knew, but concerning His descent and genealogy. But he was not worthy to be taught the wonderful mystery of our Lord’s eternal being and His Incarnation; such truths are revealed only to the pure and humble. Our Lord therefore only rebuked the arrogance of the infidel judge, by reminding him that he had no power save from God, and warned him with wonderful gentleness against the crime he was about to commit.

APPLICATION.— Why does not God speak to you? Why does He give you so little of His divine light? It is because you are not prepared to listen to Him — because, by constant infidelity to grace, you lose the power God has given you of discerning between good and evil.

AFFECTIONS.— I will pray humbly for light to see what reason I have to reproach myself on these heads, and for grace to amend.

RESOLUTIONS.— Prepare your heart for prayer by humility and contrition, united with great confidence in God.

POINT III

"And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release Him. But the Jews cried out, saying, If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend; for whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar." (St. John 19: 12.)

CONSIDERATION.— This last threat of the Jews put an end to the struggle that had been going on in the breast of the cowardly governor. The fear of offending a mortal prince prevailed over his reason, over justice, the warnings of conscience, and even the fear of drawing down Divine vengeance. His head was confused, his heart fainted within him, and he hastened to deliver up Jesus to death.

APPLICATION.— There is no one who does not detest the criminal cowardice of Pilate; and yet in these days there are a great many Christians who give up their sacred obligations from human respect. Let us give thanks to God for having withdrawn us from the world, where human respect and self-interest exercise a sway so tyrannical that many fall victims to them.

COLLOQUY with the Mother of our Lord, who, we may suppose, was aware of the plans laid against the reputation and the life of her Divine Son.

JESUS UNJUSTLY CONDEMNED

HIS RESIGNATION

1st Prel. Consider Jesus, "who delivered Himself to him that judged Him unjustly."

2d Prel. Ask for victory over your passions.

POINT I

"Pilate saith to them, . . . Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar. Then, therefore, he delivered Him to them for to be crucified."
(St. John 19: 15, 16.)

CONSIDERATION.—Never did judge pronounce a more unjust sentence; for He that was condemned as the worst of malefactors had been four times publicly proclaimed innocent. How did it happen that Pilate, naturally right-minded and well-intentioned, descended to such cowardly wickedness? We know the reason; from the beginning he wanted energy and resolution to oppose the popular fury; for he was aware that "for envy they had delivered Him." (St. Matt. 27: 18.)

APPLICATION.—Nothing is more to be dreaded than the first giving way to passion; generally, the first false step paves the way for others, and brings us only too often to a point from which we should formerly have shrunk with horror. Thus we learn how men once distinguished for their qualities of heart and mind, even religious who were long the edification of their brethren, have fallen into heresy, apostacy, and even infidelity. They merely yielded in the beginning to some slight temptation of wounded self-love or sensuality; but in the end they were blinded by passion, and became its victims.

AFFECTIONS.— Thank God who has mercifully preserved you from falling a victim to those passions which you have so often flattered, where you should rather have struggled against them energetically.

RESOLUTIONS.— To oppose courageously the first attacks of passion, according to the proverb, “*Principiis obsta.*” “Resist from the beginning.”

POINT II

“And Pilate, taking water, washed his hands before the people, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just man. Look you to it. And the whole people answering, said, His blood be upon us, and upon our children.” (St. Matt. 27: 24, 25.)

CONSIDERATION.— When those charged with the maintenance of law and order fail in their duty, the consequences are usually as fatal to their subordinates as to themselves. We have a proof of this here: if Pilate, when convinced of our Lord’s innocence, had censured His enemies as they deserved, and given Him back justified to the affection of the people, these last would have had no part in the guilt of the chief priests, nor would they have uttered that fearful imprecation, which, during more than eighteen centuries, has hung over their race: “His blood be upon us, and upon our children.”

APPLICATION.— Far be from us any feeling of bitterness against our superiors when they wisely and firmly maintain religious discipline, reprove our failings, and, when required, vigorously oppose the first symptoms of our disorderly inclinations. In indulging such sentiments, we but compromise our best interests, and imitate those invalids who, when bitter medicine is found necessary for their cure, manifest resentment against the physician who prescribes it.

AFFECTIONS.— Let us rejoice in the Lord that we are ruled by superiors who are truly charitable, watch-

ful, and faithful in correcting and reproofing us. Let us manifest our gratitude, and pray fervently for them.

RESOLUTIONS.—When humbled by reproof, I will say, with the holy King David: “Bonum mihi, quia humiliasti me.” “It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me.” (Psalm 118: 71.)

POINT III

“And they took Jesus, and led Him forth, and, bearing His own cross, He went forth to that place which is called Calvary.” (St. John 19: 16, 17.)

CONSIDERATION.—St. Peter speaks of the perfect submission with which Jesus accepted His unjust sentence, “Tradebat autem judicanti se injuste.” “He delivered Himself to him that judged Him unjustly.” (1. Peter 2: 23.) That is, He looked on it as imposed by His Father in expiation of the sins of the world. God makes use of the malice or the mistakes of men to accomplish His designs, and in expiation of the sins of the world. The design of God here was the reparation of His glory and the redemption of mankind by the death of His Divine Son. And it was this that our Lord had ardently desired from the first moment of His Incarnation: judge, therefore, of the joy and eagerness with which He laid the heavy cross upon His shoulders.

APPLICATION.—Our Lord here teaches us how to meet the persecution and ill-treatment of wicked men, and how we should receive the humiliations, or even the punishments, that our superiors may inflict upon us by mistake. How has it been with you in such instances? If you have Jesus always before your eyes, nothing will seem difficult; all your glory and happiness will be in bearing the cross after Him.

COLLOQUY with Jesus, the Model and King of martyrs.

JESUS FALLS UNDER THE CROSS

SIMON BEARS THE CROSS AFTER HIM

1st Prel. Behold Jesus falling three times under the weight of His cross.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to follow Him in the way of suffering and humiliation.

POINT I

"And the soldiers led Him away into the court of the palace; . . . and after they had mocked Him, they took off the purple from Him, and put His own garments on him; and they led Him out to crucify Him, . . . into the place called Golgotha, which, being interpreted, is the place of Calvary; and with Him they crucify two thieves." (St. Mark 15: 16, 20, 22, 27.)

CONSIDERATION.—Let us observe how our Lord, amidst all the circumstances of His passion, is insatiable not merely of sufferings, but of shame and humiliation. He submits to the ignominy of crucifixion in the place where the vilest criminals suffer, in company with two of them, not in borrowed garments, in which He might not have been recognized, but in those which He wore on the day of His triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

APPLICATION.—What does our Lord teach us who call ourselves specially His disciples? Not to be ashamed of, but rather to glory in, His livery—that is to say, in contempt, raillery, rebuffs, injuries, and persecutions endured in His service; to rejoice in thus closely resembling our Model and Master. How does this agree with your feelings, desires, or fears?

AFFECTIONS.—O Jesus! placed last amongst men for love of me, teach me to look on myself, and willingly to be looked on by others, as the last among my brethren.

RESOLUTIONS.— Strive to be able to say with the great Apostle, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world.” (Gal. 6: 14.)

POINT II

“And, as they led Him away, they laid hold of one Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country; and they laid the cross on him to carry after Jesus.” (St. Luke 23: 26.)

CONSIDERATION.— Jesus, fatigued and exhausted by fasting, by being hurried from place to place, and by the loss of blood, falls beneath the weight of the cross. Tradition tells us that He fell thrice; twice, gathering up His little remaining strength, He rose and continued His journey; but the third time, the Jews, fearing that He would die upon the way, and that they would thus be deprived of their expected pleasure, forced Simon to bear the cross to the summit of Calvary.

APPLICATION.— Does it not seem astonishing that no one out of all that crowd, many of whom had been miraculously healed by Him, and who besides still secretly believed in Him, came forward to offer to carry our Lord's cross? Must this not have wounded so tender a heart as that of Jesus; and do not we also wound Him when we refuse to follow Him in the path of suffering and humiliation, through unfounded fear or human respect?

AFFECTIONS.— Confusion, repentance, unreserved offering of ourselves.

RESOLUTIONS.— To excite ourselves to fervor and generosity in the service of God.

POINT III

"They forced one Simon, a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and of Rufus, to take up His cross." (St. Mark 15: 21.)

CONSIDERATION.— It seems from these words that Simon at first showed great reluctance to carry our Lord's cross; but from the fact of the Evangelist's making special mention of his name and that of his two sons, we may believe that, enlightened by Divine grace, he bore it as became a true disciple, and was, as well as his children, richly rewarded; and, according to a generally admitted tradition, all three became celebrated in the Church as either bishops or martyrs.

APPLICATION.— Let us renew our love and esteem for the cross, the source of our glory and happiness. In the cross is salvation; in the cross is life; in the cross is protection from enemies, says the *Imitation*. In the cross is infusion of heavenly sweetness; in the cross is strength of mind; in the cross is joy of spirit; in the cross is height of virtue; in the cross is perfection of sanctity. There is no health of soul, nor hope of eternal life, but in the cross. Take up, therefore, thy cross and follow Jesus, and thou shalt go into life everlasting.

COLLOQUY with Simon of Cyrene.

HOLY WOMEN WEEP OVER JESUS:

JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER ON HIS SORROWFUL JOURNEY

1st Prel. Behold those women amongst the multitude who bewailed and lamented Jesus, and specially His holy Mother.
2d Prel. Ask for the grace of tender compassion.

POINT I

"And there followed Him a great multitude of people, and of women, who bewailed and lamented Him." (St. Luke 23: 27.)

CONSIDERATION.— We do not learn that all the multitude were filled with the same compassionate tenderness as these holy women; many, perhaps the greatest number, apart from the enemies of Jesus, were attracted by mere curiosity, and were quite indifferent to the fate of their Lord about to die for them.

APPLICATION.— Thus in our own times a great multitude follow in spirit the various phases of our Lord's Passion during this holy season of Lent, and you amongst the number can do so with more leisure than ordinary Christians, and at least give an hour a day to this exercise. But what are your impressions during this hour? Are you, like these holy women, touched with love, compassion, and contrition at the thought that it is for your sins, and for your sake, that Jesus suffers and is about to die?

AFFECTIONS.— Beg earnestly of Jesus that He may teach you Himself, as He taught some privileged souls, to meditate on His sorrowful Passion, and that, like them, you may find in it an inexhaustible source of precious tears, and a continual increase of Divine love.

RESOLUTIONS.— Renew your efforts to meditate devoutly on the Passion, especially now when the holy season of Lent is drawing to a close.

POINT II

"And there followed Him . . . women who bewailed and lamented Him." (Ibid.)

CONSIDERATION.—Although St. Luke, speaking of these holy women, makes no special mention of our Blessed Lady, we may piously believe, in accordance with universal tradition, that the Son and the Mother met upon the road, particularly as St. John says explicitly that Mary stood by the cross when Jesus reached the end of His journey. Who can express the feelings of the heart of this the most loving of Mothers, when, making her way through the crowd, she stood face to face with her Divine Son, disfigured, bruised, crowned with thorns, covered with wounds and blood, surrounded by soldiers and executioners, who loaded Him with imprecations, and dragged Him to death?

APPLICATION.—God willed that our Blessed Lady should be thus afflicted; that she above all the Saints might have the largest share in the Passion of her Son and in the work of our redemption, and thus accumulate more merit and richer treasures of sanctity than all who have yet lived or shall live. Do not be astonished, therefore, do not murmur, above all do not be discouraged, if God sends you much suffering and tribulation, but believe that He does so to increase your love and your merit.

AFFECTIONS.—Compassionate the unspeakable sufferings of Jesus and Mary. Offer them to God the Father for the salvation of the world, the conversion of sinners, etc.

RESOLUTIONS.—Consider yourself fortunate if you have sometimes, frequently, even habitually, to endure mental sufferings in the fulfillment of your duties.

POINT III

"But Jesus, turning to them, said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me, but weep for yourselves and your children."
(St. Luke 23: 28.)

CONSIDERATION.— Here let us admire the greatness of our Lord's tenderness to others. He forgets His own sufferings in His care for them. He warns them of evil days to come, and warns them to prepare for them by tears and penance.

APPLICATION.— How different is our Lord's conduct from ours! When we are suffering in body or mind, do we not often forget what we owe to others, fancying that every one ought to be interested in us and pity our condition; and if they do not do so, do we not indulge in ill-humor and discontent? If we look at our Lord, we shall be more generous, less occupied with ourselves, more attentive to the wants of those around us, making it a rule never to let others suffer through us.

COLLOQUY with the Blessed Virgin meeting her Divine Son on the road to Calvary. She sees Him about to die for us, exhausted, oppressed with the weight of the cross, broken-hearted at sight of her bitter suffering, abandoned and forsaken by those whom He had most loved!

MOTIVES FOR PENANCE

DRAWN FROM THE THOUGHT OF JUDGMENT

1st Prel. I will imagine myself before the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ.

2d Prel. I will ask for grace to know myself, that I may be able to judge myself here, "according to the counsel of the Apostle." (1. Cor. 11: 31.)

POINT I

CONSIDERATION.—Three things are to be feared in the particular judgment: 1, the Judge; 2, the account to be rendered; 3, the sentence.

By penance we may make the Judge favorable to us. The Judge is our Lord Himself, whom we have neglected, offended, and injured, with all the malice of sin, and so often, so deliberately, even when He loaded us with benefits. Now He is *misericordiarum Dominus*, a God of mercy, ready to pardon at the first sign of repentance; but then He will be only *ultionum Dominus*, a God of justice. As His mercy was infinite, so will be His justice; not the smallest fault, not an idle word, He has said, will pass unperceived, or remain unpunished. These thoughts filled holy Job with fear. "Quid faciam cum surrexerit ad judicandum Dominus?" "For what shall I do," said he within himself, "when God shall rise to judge?" (Job 31: 14.)

APPLICATION.—What have you not to expect, or rather to fear, from your Judge, you who have perhaps lived long in a state of tepidity, which blinds man as to the number and gravity of his faults, and maintains him in false security? What, then, should we do? Our Lord tells you, "Be at agreement with thy adversary betimes, whilst thou art in the way with him," (St. Matt. 5: 26;) that is, according to St. Augustine, with God who is your Judge, and whose enemy

sin has made you; and you can do so, if "ye be humbled, therefore, under the mighty hand of God." (1. St. Peter 5:6.) To use St. Peter's words, "Repent therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." (Acts 3:19.)

AFFECTIONS.— Humbly acknowledge your ingratitude and your many infidelities. Repent, and offer yourself with sincerity to do penance for them.

RESOLUTIONS.— Persevere in the practices of penance and mortification which you imposed on yourself on the first Monday of Lent.

POINT II

CONSIDERATION.— By penance we may lighten the account we shall have to give. What an account! All will be passed in review by One from whom nothing can be hidden: the time lost in useless things; the good left undone, the good ill-done; all our thoughts, intentions, words, and actions; and, what is worse for the religious, all the means of salvation and sanctification lavishly bestowed upon him daily and hourly. *Gratiam sequitur iudicium.* The judgment will be severe in proportion to the grace received, says St. Cyprian, following the words of our Lord, "Cui multum datum est, multum quæretur ab eo." "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required." (St. Luke 12:48.)

APPLICATION.— These truths filled even the penitents of the desert with fear; they never thought they had sufficiently atoned for their past lives. Their only means of consolation under this dread were tears and constant mortification, a life of continued penance until death. Imitate them; try to lighten by such a life of penance and mortification your heavy account of sin, imperfection, and negligence; and do it with special generosity during this holy season, two-thirds of which are already gone.

AFFECTIONS.—“Averte faciem tuam a peccatis meis, et omnes iniquitates meas dele.” “Turn away Thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.” (Psalm 50: 10.)

RESOLUTIONS.—As in the preceding Point.

POINT III

CONSIDERATION.—By penance we may insure a favorable sentence. The sentence of the Judge will be irrevocable — life eternal or death eternal; the first securing to the soul of the just, endless glory and the delights of heaven, although it may be for a while detained in a place of expiation; the second condemning the soul of the sinner, to Satan and the eternal pains of hell.

APPLICATION.—You earnestly desire to be amongst the number of the elect, to enter into the immediate possession of heaven. It is in your power, with the grace of God. Endeavor to live as a holy religious, expiating by constant penance and mortifications all that yet tarnishes the purity of your soul. This is the only efficacious means you have of insuring what you so much desire. What happiness will you not experience at the hour of death, if you have adopted this means of securing salvation! Why, therefore, should you not do so?

COLLOQUY with Jesus atoning for our sins.

JESUS ON CALVARY

THE SOLDIERS GIVE JESUS GALL TO DRINK, AND STRIP
HIM OF HIS GARMENTS

1st Prel. Imagine you see Jesus surrounded by His executioners, who strip Him of his garments.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to grow in the knowledge and love of Jesus, who suffered in so many ways, and with such great love for me.

POINT I

"And they came to the place that is called Golgotha, which is the place of Calvary." (St. Matt. 27: 33.)

CONSIDERATION.— There are numerous mysteries connected with the place which our Lord chose for consummating His sacrifice: it was the spot where God commanded Abraham to offer up Isaac; where the Jews were accustomed to execute great criminals; and where, according to tradition, Noah buried Adam's head, which he had taken in the Ark with him, the Hebrew word Golgotha signifying "chief," or "head." The special mention by the four Evangelists, of the Hebrew name Golgotha, together with the Latinized Greek "cranium," the place of Calvary, appears to give authority to the tradition always maintained by the Jews, according to the testimony of Tertullian, Origen, St. Athanasius, and the greater number of the Fathers.

APPLICATION.— Let us meditate on these mysteries, for they are full of instruction. The sacrifice of Jesus, recalling to mind that of Abraham, should inspire us with love and gratitude to Him and His eternal Father, who thus fulfilled the typical sacrifice of the great patriarch; next, our Lord's choice of the place used for the execution of criminals should remind us that He suffered for the sins of the world, and for each one of

us; and lastly, His dying on the spot where lie the ashes of our father Adam should show us how His death destroys the empire of death, and gives us a right to life eternal.

AFFECTIONS.— Admire, praise, and adore the wonderful and merciful ways of Providence, manifested even in circumstances which escape our observation.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will strive to discern and bless the hand of Providence in every detail of my life, and in all that occurs daily before me.

POINT II

“And they gave Him wine to drink, mingled with gall. And when He had tasted, He would not drink.” (St. Matt. 27: 34.)

CONSIDERATION.— It was the custom to give those condemned to death wine mixed with myrrh, either to strengthen them or to partly destroy their sense of feeling; but by a refinement of cruelty, gall was mixed with the wine given to our Lord. He took it; He tasted it; but, as the Gospel says, “He would not drink.”

APPLICATION.— Why did our Lord thus taste this bitter draught, and then refuse to drink it? He tasted it — first, to suffer in the sense of taste, which His executioners had not been able to touch; second, to expiate our intemperance and sensuality in the use of food; thirdly, to encourage us, by His example, to mortify our taste, or at least to resist our appetites, and never to exceed the bounds of religious temperance. On the other hand, He would not drink, because He would not in any degree assuage the sufferings which it was His will to endure to their utmost extent.

AFFECTIONS.— Ask pardon for your sins of gluttony and intemperance.

RESOLUTIONS.— Always to mortify yourself in some particular at meals, or at least not to seek what is most gratifying to the appetite.

POINT III

JESUS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

CONSIDERATION.—The Roman law ordered that those condemned to be crucified should be stripped of their garments, thus adding shame to their other torments. Therefore Jesus, having tasted the bitter draught his executioners gave Him, was despoiled of His garments, which adhered so closely to His bleeding form that they could not be removed without opening His wounds, and causing Him fresh agony.

APPLICATION.—Why did our Lord will to suffer this fresh martyrdom of confusion and pain? To teach us, and to encourage us by His example, never to withdraw from any sort of shame, suffering, or privation in His service, should we even become a laughing-stock to the world, and be deprived of everything, like the dead man carried out to burial. This renunciation must be absolute in fact, or at least in affection. Jesus Christ requires it. He says, "If any man will follow me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (St. Mark 8:34.) What should we think of the religious who dreads the ridicule with which the world treats his habit or his poverty, or who tries to please the world by studying his appearance, as far as the little he possesses allows him?

COLLOQUY with the Mother of Jesus, who witnessed the horrible treatment to which her Divine Son was subjected.

JESUS CRUCIFIED BETWEEN TWO THIEVES

1st Prel. Behold Jesus lying on the cross, and the executioners who nail Him to it by the strokes of their hammers.

2d Prel. Ask for lively sentiments of compunction and compassion.

POINT I

“And it was the third hour, and they crucified Him.”
(St. Mark 15: 25.)

CONSIDERATION.—Jesus is come to Calvary, to the appointed place and at the hour appointed from all eternity for the consummation of His sacrifice. Let us go there in spirit: what do we see? — the Roman soldiers dispersing the crowd, Jesus standing by the huge wooden cross, the executioners each holding a nail and hammer. Our Lord is commanded to place Himself upon His hard bed of death. He obeys without a reply; He lies down upon the cross; He stretches Himself upon it. An executioner asks for His right hand; He gives it; it is seized and fastened to the cross by an enormous nail, with redoubled blows which re-echo around. But Jesus utters neither a cry of sorrow nor a murmur of complaint.

APPLICATION.—“Crucifixus etiam pro nobis.” He was crucified for us; for me, for my sins, and for the love of me, Jesus endured these fearful torments, the very thought of which makes nature shudder. The Evangelist contents himself with the simple words, “Crucefixerunt eum.” “They crucified Him.” Can I contemplate Him nailed to this cross without emotion, without being touched to the heart, and affected to tears of love and compassion?

AFFECTIONS.—Awakening in my heart those lively emotions whence the Saints derived strength, consolation, and love, I will approach my beloved Saviour, be-

fore He is raised on the cross; I will embrace His blessed wounds, and, together with my lips, I will fix on them all the affections of my heart.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will endeavor to prove my love for Jesus by generous and ever-increasing self-denial and mortification; thus may I say with the Apostle, “With Christ I am nailed to the cross; I live now, not I, but Christ liveth in me.” (Gal. 2: 19, 20.)

POINT II

JESUS IS RAISED UP ON THE CROSS

CONSIDERATION.— What a terrible punishment to be stretched upon the cross, with hands and feet nailed, and in this manner to wait for death! But this punishment did not suffice for the love of Jesus; He must suffer ten-fold, a hundred-fold more. The cross upon which He was nailed was raised, and firmly fixed in the rock. He remained hanging to it by the whole weight of His body, supported only by the nails, dying by inches. We can scarcely bear to think of such suffering, in which a minute must seem a day, but which Jesus bore for three mortal hours. And this for me and for love of me.

APPLICATION.— O Christian! O religious! whoever you are, here pause and ask yourself — 1st, What are and what can my sufferings ever be, compared to the sufferings of my King and my Saviour? 2dly, What have I done till now for this Saviour, who has loved me to such an excess, and what can I do now for the love of Him?

AFFECTIONS.— Entreat of our Lord that He will give you light to discern the sacrifice that He requires of you, as a pledge of your love and gratitude.

RESOLUTIONS.— To lose no time in accomplishing this sacrifice, however painful to nature.

POINT III

"And with Him they crucify two thieves; the one on His right hand, and the other on His left; and the Scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And with the wicked He was reputed."
(St. Mark 15: 27, 28.)

CONSIDERATION.— Jesus, as the King of Martyrs, not only willed His sufferings to be incomparably great, but also His humiliations, and thus it was. Hanging between two thieves, He is looked upon, not only as the worst of criminals, but even as an infamous impostor, who falsely asserted Himself to be the Son of God. And a semblance of truth is even given to this accusation; for when called on by the Scribes, if He were truly the Son of God, to come down from the cross, He does not yield to their demand. "If Thou be the Son of God," they cry, "come down from the cross, and we will believe." (St. Matt. 27: 40, 42.) Jesus, for love of us, consents to die with a stain upon His reputation!

APPLICATION.— Let us kneel in spirit before Jesus suspended in ignominy on the cross, reconciling Heaven and earth, between which He hangs; blotting out by His blood, as the Apostle expresses it, the handwriting of the decree that was against us. "*Delens quod adversus nos erat chirographum decreti, affigens illud cruci.*" (Col. 2: 14.) Let us repeat, in the words that the Church employs at each Station in the Way of the Cross, "We adore Thee and we bless Thee, O Christ! because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world."

COLLOQUY with Jesus on the cross, or with His Mother standing beneath it.

FIRST WORD OF JESUS

1st Prel. Imagine you see Jesus raised on the cross, and hear Him say, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

2d Prel. Ask for a spirit of gentleness and charity.

POINT I

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."
(St. Luke 23: 34.)

CONSIDERATION.—The blood of Abel cried to heaven for vengeance, and the vengeance of heaven fell without delay upon Cain and his descendants. The crime of the Jews who nailed their Messiah, the Holy of holies, to the cross, was infinitely greater. Yet at His last hour, instead of asking His Heavenly Father to manifest His justice by confounding His enemies and establishing His innocence, the first words of Jesus were, "Pater, dimitte illis, non enim sciunt quid faciunt." "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." What an example of gentleness and charity!

APPLICATION.—Jesus is your Model, which you have promised so often to follow, especially in His gentleness and charity. But examine how you have done so. Jesus, innocence itself, so horribly treated, prays for His murderers, and even excuses their guilt, whilst *you*, perhaps, nourish feelings of bitterness and revenge against those who have wronged you but very slightly, over-estimating their offense, or attributing to them intentions which they may never have entertained.

AFFECTIONS.—Admire and extol the incomparable meekness and charity of Christ. Reproach yourself

for not having imitated Him more closely — for the harshness and impatience you manifest toward others.

RESOLUTIONS.— To excuse the faults of others unless actually responsible for their conduct; to consider that they may have acted without reflection or intention to displease you.

POINT II

“ And Pilate wrote a title also, and he put it upon the cross: and the writing was, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews: and it was written in Hebrew, in Greek, and in Latin.” (St. John 19: 19, 20.)

CONSIDERATION.— Pilate’s motive in placing this apparently honorable inscription above the cross, in the three then best-known languages, was to mortify the Jews, who had compelled him to condemn our Lord unjustly; but at the same time he unconsciously fulfilled the words of Jesus, “ He that humbleth himself shall be exalted,” as well as the prophecy that the Gospel should pass from the Hebrews to the Greeks and Romans, and by these — by the Roman Pontiffs — should spread into every country, and be proclaimed in every tongue.

APPLICATION.— Remark here the admirable providence of God, and how He obtains His ends in spite, and even by means, of the perversity of man; this we see every day, and therefore why shouldst thou, O devout soul! be so fearful and mistrustful in His service? Let us repose upon His providence, and no one can harm us; in the words of the Apostle, we know that “ to them that love God all things work together unto good,” not even excepting persecutions, or the passing triumph of wicked men. (Rom. 8: 28.)

AFFECTIONS.— Adore the deep wisdom of Divine Providence.

RESOLUTIONS.— In every circumstance of your life,

place yourself unreservedly in the hands of the best and most vigilant of Fathers.

POINT III

“Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that He said, I am the King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.” (St. John 19: 21, 22.)

CONSIDERATION.— The inscription Pilate ordered to be placed above the cross wounded the pride of the chief priests, who came in a body to the governor, requesting him to change it; but Pilate, so weak and timid before, was firm now, and only replied to their imperious demand, “Quod scripsi, scripsi,” “What I have written I have written.”

APPLICATION.— Here Pilate, although a heathen, gives us a lesson; he teaches us not to change our resolutions lightly, particularly those we have formed in retreats, but to adhere to them at whatever cost. So that under any pretext whatever — and pretexts are rarely wanting to those tempted to abandon their resolutions — let us stand firm and say, “What I have written under the inspiration of grace, when God spoke to my heart, is to remain unaltered, and I will not depart from it.”

COLLOQUY with God the Father, looking on His crucified Son.

FEAST OF THE DOLORS

OF OUR BLESSED LADY

1st Prel. Imagine you see our Blessed Lady standing at the foot of the cross, looking on her crucified Son.

2d Prel. Ask the grace of tender compassion toward our dearest Mother in her bitter sorrow, and to understand how much, in what manner, and wherefore she suffered.

POINT I

HOW GREAT IS HER SUFFERING

CONSIDERATION.— Let us enter into the spirit of the Church this day, and fix, as she does, our thoughts exclusively upon our Lady's sufferings; she suffers on our account and for us.

To understand in some measure how much she suffers, we must imagine a mother, the tenderest of mothers, who loves nothing so much as her son, her only son; this Son, the most admirable of the children of men, she is forced to see die in the prime of life, by no natural death, but by the hand of the executioner, surrounded by an angry mob, nailed living on a cross, after having been covered with wounds from head to foot, and crowned with thorns; to behold Him struggling with death for three long hours, without being able in the least to assuage His agony! Did ever mother suffer such a martyrdom? But what passes our comprehension is, that we may truly say that she endured this martyrdom for thirty-three years, knowing, as she did, from Simeon's prophecy, of the sword of grief which was to pierce her heart. Well does the Church style her Queen of Martyrs, and apply to her

the words of the Psalmist, "*Defecit in dolore vita mea, et anni mei in gemitibus.*" "My life is wasted with grief, and my years in sighs." (Psalm 30: 11.)

APPLICATION.— Let us think of this when thus gazing on the picture of our Lady at the foot of the cross, and we shall find our hearts filled with love, filial compassion, and devotion; we shall account our sufferings but trifles, and gain courage to bear or surmount them.

AFFECTIONS.— Admiration and compassion; acts of love and filial piety.

RESOLUTIONS.— To practice devotion to our Lady of Sorrows, and encourage this devotion in others.

POINT II

IN WHAT MANNER SHE SUFFERS

CONSIDERATION.— How did our Lady endure so many and so great sufferings? 1st, with perfect resignation and without a word of complaint; 2dly, with admirable conformity to all the designs of Almighty God in the cruel and ignominious death of her Son; 3dly, with generosity apparently impossible in a mother, sacrificing in her heart to the glory of God and the salvation of the world her own ardent desire for the safety of her son; 4thly, with constancy beyond heroism, standing beneath the cross till Jesus breathed His last sigh; lastly, with invincible sweetness and charity, joining her Divine Son in praying for His murderers.

APPLICATION.— Mary is here the Queen and Model of Martyrs: see how far you are conformed to her example in the sufferings you have to endure.

AFFECTIONS.— Beg of Mary to obtain for you grace to sanctify all your pains and sufferings by the practice of those virtues of which she gives you the example.

RESOLUTIONS.— In the spirit of faith to accept all

crosses as coming from the hand of God for your greater good.

POINT III

WHEREFORE DOES SHE SUFFER?

CONSIDERATION.—Wherefore did God will that our Lady's whole life should be passed in suffering, who had nothing to expiate like the rest of mankind? The Fathers of the Church reply that, to merit the title of Queen of Saints, she was obliged to surpass them all in her resemblance to her Son, so pre-eminently "*Virum dolorum*," "*The Man of Sorrows*," (Isa. 53:3;) in love for God, which is proved by suffering for Him; in merit, which is gained also by suffering; and in sacrifice, for the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls.

APPLICATION.—If God, wishing to bestow a mark of His peculiar love upon our Lady, could not find anything more precious than the cross, ought we to consider ourselves miserable when He gives us a share in it also, even should He decree that we carry it to the end? If so, He only treats us as He did her whom He loved best; let that thought console us, and let us carry our cross willingly after our dearest Mother. Have our actions and sentiments been hitherto in accordance with this principle?

COLLOQUY with the Holy Virgin, Queen of Martyrs.

THE PENITENT THIEF

THE SECOND WORD ON THE CROSS

1st Prel. Behold Jesus crucified between two thieves.

2d Prel. Ask for great docility in following the inspirations of grace.

POINT I

“And one of those robbers who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us. But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, Neither dost thou fear God, seeing thou art under the same condemnation?”
(St. Luke 23: 39, 40.)

CONSIDERATION.— The striking contrast between the two thieves offers at once a mystery and a lesson. The mystery is this, that both these thieves witness the superhuman charity and patience of our Lord, who hangs between them, praying and suffering for both of them alike; but, nevertheless, the one remains an impious blasphemer to the end, and dies impenitent; whilst the other, docile to the first movements of grace, opens his eyes and heart to the truth, and dies the death of the predestined, baptized, as St. Cyprian says, in his own blood. The Church calls upon the faithful to venerate him, under the name of Dismas, on the 25th of March.

APPLICATION.— The practical lesson to be derived from the above mystery is, that God gives each man grace sufficient for his salvation, though He gives more largely to some than to others. But He also requires His creatures' co-operation; thus, however great the graces bestowed on the good thief, he would not have been either converted or saved without his correspondence with these graces. And it follows that we religious, who have received extraordinary graces, must not

look upon our salvation as therefore secured. What alone can give us a moral assurance of salvation, is a faithful correspondence to each grace successively given. Do we thus correspond, with fidelity and generosity, to the graces conferred on us?

AFFECTIONS.—Let us thank God for the special graces conferred on us, and daily renewed; and ask forgiveness for our abuse of Divine grace.

RESOLUTIONS.—Frequently to examine ourselves with regard to our fidelity in corresponding with the movements or inspirations of grace.

POINT II

* And we indeed (suffer) justly; for we receive the due reward of our evil deeds; but this man hath done no evil. And he said to Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy kingdom." (St. Luke 23: 41, 42.)

CONSIDERATION.—We go straight to God, and insure not only His forgiveness, but draw down upon us still greater favors, when, like the penitent thief, we acknowledge our misdeeds and accept our punishment with contrition and resignation, joining humble and confident prayer to our submissive confession.

The unhesitating confession of the Divinity of our Lord, which was then, as it were, annihilated, made by the penitent thief, shows us that, besides his justification, he received the gift of faith in an eminent degree.

APPLICATION.—We are all weak; we have often considerable faults of which our conscience accuses us. Do we imitate the penitent thief? Do we not try to deceive ourselves respecting them, or to hide or deny them before others? And with what sort of grace do we receive the correction they require?

AFFECTIONS.—Detest the pride which blinds you to your faults and prevents you from correcting them.

Pray for courage to conquer self-love, which is the ordinary cause of groundless and even false excuses.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will bear reproof in silence, and without attempting to excuse myself; I will receive corrections and admonitions with humility, and will endeavor to profit by them.

POINT III

“And Jesus said to him, Amen, I say to thee, This day thou shalt be with me in paradise.” (St. Luke 23:43.)

CONSIDERATION.—What consoling and encouraging words for the penitent thief in his last hour, surrounded by everything that renders death terrible and induces despair — agonizing pain, the remembrance of the past, the dread of the future! How great the power of one single fervent prayer! Here it changes a hardened sinner into a saint. He only asked our Lord to remember him; and our Lord gave him, with the remission of all his sins, the promise of a happy death, to be followed by bliss eternal. “This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”

APPLICATION.—How wrong, therefore, to distrust the love of God or the efficacy of prayer! However guilty or miserable we may be, or have been, prayer contains a virtue in itself, apart from the holiness of the man who offers it; and the more wretched our case, the more we should have confidence in its being answered. “That is very encouraging; but sometimes,” you say, “I feel as if I could not pray in the least;” then make use only of the prayer of the penitent thief, “Lord, remember me,” so poor, so miserable. Never shall we do so in vain.

COLLOQUY with the penitent thief in paradise with our Lord Jesus Christ.

JESUS ON THE CROSS,

ABANDONED, STRIPPED, AND BLASPHEMED

1st Prel. Behold Jesus, so short a time since triumphantly received, abandoned and blasphemed, and nailed to the cross.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to detach yourself from the world, that you may attach yourself to God alone.

POINT I

"And all His acquaintance . . . stood afar off, beholding these things." (St. Luke 23 : 49.)

CONSIDERATION.— All the ceremonies of Palm-Sunday, the blessing of the palms, the procession, the chanted hosannas, are instituted by the Church to recall the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem on that day. What a contrast, at only six days' interval, between the honors then rendered to our Lord, and the affronts and blasphemies that greet Him beneath the cross! Then, a great multitude that was come to the festival, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet Him; and now He is condemned to death, He is left alone, abandoned by His friends, who stand afar off beholding Him!

APPLICATION.— Let us learn from this not to count upon the help or consolation of our friends, particularly in time of misfortune or persecutions; and to bear the want of sympathy even from our brethren and superiors, content to have God alone for the witness of our sorrows and sufferings. Happy is the religious

* In this Meditation we have tried to unite two subjects without interrupting our consideration of the Passion — Jesus dying on the cross, and His triumphal entry into Jerusalem six days before.

who has early learnt this lesson; he is never heard to complain of neglect or want of consideration on the part of others. Jesus abandoned on the cross is sufficient for him.

AFFECTIONS.—Jesus! consolation of the afflicted and help of the weak, have mercy on me and help me.

RESOLUTIONS.—When suffering and forsaken, I will think of Jesus abandoned by all, even by those whom He had loaded with favors, and for whom He suffered.

POINT II

“The soldiers, therefore, when they had crucified Him, took His garments, and they made four parts, to every soldier a part: and also His coat.” (St. John 19: 23.)

CONSIDERATION.—Six days before, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, not satisfied with welcoming our Lord in triumphal procession, spread their garments in His way, and strewed them before Him. (St. Matt. 21: 8.) And how do they treat Him now? They strip Him of His garments, and divide them before His eyes into four parts!

APPLICATION.—Jesus, thus deprived of all things, even of those considered absolutely necessary to existence, teaches us the nothingness of those earthly possessions which worldly men seek so eagerly, often to their souls' cost. Jesus suffers Himself to be thus despoiled with perfect calmness; for He is detached from everything below. Let us thank Him for having called us to the profession of holy poverty, the source of our peace, security, and happiness.

AFFECTIONS.—O Jesus! stripped of all for my sake, teach me to sacrifice, for Thee, all earthly affections.

RESOLUTIONS.—To endeavor daily more and more to acquire the spirit of perfection and religious poverty.

POINT III

"And they that passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads, and saying, . . . If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. In like manner also the chief priests, with the scribes and ancients." (St. Matt. 27: 39-41.)

CONSIDERATION.— Another contrast, not less striking than the preceding ones. Six days ago, the multitude that formed the procession from Bethphage to Jerusalem were crying with one voice, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, hosanna in the highest!" (St. Matt. 21: 9.) And now this same multitude, after having denied the Messiah they so lately had received in triumph, mock and blaspheme Him even in the very agonies of death!

APPLICATION.— To-day they cry Hosanna, they reverence and applaud Him; to-morrow it is, Crucify Him! and He is forgotten, disdained, and despised. Such is the history of earthly greatness. What folly, therefore, if in the exercise of your sacred ministry, or in any other work, you seek for notice, fame or applause! In doing so, not only will you lose all merit in the sight of God, but you will lose likewise the esteem of men, who detest vanity, particularly in a religious.

COLLOQUY with St. Mary Magdalene, the inseparable companion of our Lord during His Passion and at His death.

MOTIVES FOR PENANCE

DRAWN FROM THE THOUGHT OF HELL

1st Prel. Imagine a lost soul asking for an hour in which to do penance. O! si daretur hora! Oh! if an hour were given to me!

2d Prel. Ask for the grace to do penance, moved by the consideration of eternal reprobation.

POINT I

CONSIDERATION.—Perhaps I have merited hell; first motive. If I have been guilty of but one mortal sin, there is no doubt I have deserved eternal punishment. If unhappily, death had carried me off, at the moment that I committed the sin, I would now be suffering in the flames of hell. God, however, has been merciful to me; He has given me time to repent. “Non fecit taliter omni nationi.” “He has not been so generous to many,” (Psalm 147: 20,) who now, from the depths of hell, cry out, “Crucior in hac flamma,” “I am tormented in this flame.” (St. Luke 16: 24.) “O! si daretur hora!” “Oh! if an hour were given to me!”

APPLICATION.—Reflect on your sin which rendered you liable to everlasting death, but above all, consider the infinite mercy of God: should He not avenge on your body, the instrument of your sin, the insult offered to the best of Fathers and the stain with which you have soiled your soul? Should you not repent and do penance for the remainder of your life?

If, by the providence of God, you have preserved your baptismal innocence, acknowledge your indebtedness to Him for the grace which He has bestowed on you, and endeavor to make some return for it. This you can best do by imitating the example of St. Teresa, who by her many acts of penance obtained the grace of

conversion for those unhappy sinners whom the devil was keeping on the road to hell.

AFFECTIONS.—“Here below, O Lord! burn, cut, and spare me not, so long as Thou sparest me in eternity.”

RESOLUTIONS.— I will resume, with renewed fervor, the different practices of penance indicated in the Meditation of the first Monday of Lent.

POINT II

CONSIDERATION.— Hell threatens me; second motive. The words of our Lord are explicit: “Except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish.” (St. Luke 13: 5.) How is this? Because pride and concupiscence, which since the Fall have infected our mind and heart, rule our actions, and will infallibly lead us into every species of sin and disorder, without the practice of constant penance and mortifications. The history of religious orders proves this. Humiliation is the penance of the intellect; and how many, in rejecting it, have become apostates before God, if not before men! Mortification is the penance of the heart; and how many, unwilling to endure it, who have begun in the spirit, afterward indulge the desires of the flesh, as the Apostle St. Paul tells us. (Gal. 3: 3.) Think of those amongst them whom you have known. Think of those dangers that you yourself have run.

APPLICATION.— The Church does well to exhort us tenderly to penance from the first Sunday in Lent. Let us embrace it willingly. This is Holy-Week. We should strive, therefore, to do more than we have yet done.

AFFECTIONS.— From everlasting death, O Lord! deliver us. That Thou wouldst bring us to the spirit of true penance, we beseech Thee to hear us. (Litany of the Church.)

RESOLUTIONS.— As in the preceding Point.

POINT III

CONSIDERATION.—Beings more perfect than myself are eternally lost; third motive. The angels have fallen in heaven, and from heaven they were cast into hell. Faith assures us so. They had no time for penance; immediate punishment followed their offense — another and no less terrible truth. The renegade Judas had been called and formed by our Lord Himself to the practice of religious perfection and the apostolic functions. He spent three years with Jesus, and there secretly fostering an evil inclination, he at length became capable of conceiving and executing the most detestable of crimes, which led him to despair, suicide, and hell.

APPLICATION.—“Wherefore, he that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed, lest he fall,” (1. Cor. 10: 12;) repressing every evil inclination by continual mortification. Such is the practical conclusion of the Apostle St. Paul: “But I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway.” (1. Cor. 9: 27.) Let us reason as did St. Paul; let us act as he did, and we shall be saved with him.

COLLOQUY with the Apostle St. Paul, who, although confirmed in grace, and eminent for holiness, was so distrustful of his own virtue, so hard upon himself. Beg of him to obtain for you his spirit of humility and penance.

THIRD WORD OF JESUS:

“BEHOLD THY MOTHER!”

1st Prel. Look at our Lady and St. John at the foot of the cross.

2d Prel. Ask for an increase of love for Jesus and Mary.

POINT I

“Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, His Mother, and His Mother's sister,* Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.”
(St. John 19: 25.)

CONSIDERATION.— His Mother stood by the cross. Here we must pause and consider two admirable and apparently incompatible things: *Our Lady's extraordinary grief* and *her heroic courage*. It is difficult to conceive how she, the most loving of mothers, could behold her Son nailed alive to the cross, and suffering a three hours' agony, and remain standing beneath it. Many painters, it is true, have depicted her fainting and overwhelmed at its foot, but without any scriptural warrant. St. John says explicitly *she stood*; and the Fathers agree that, standing thus, though, according to the prophecy of Simeon, her whole soul was pierced through as by a sword, she united herself to the sacrifice of her Divine Son.

APPLICATION.— This supernatural strength was certainly the effect of a miracle of grace; but was no less also the fruit of her fidelity under all the trials which her faith and constancy had before suffered. God gives His graces in proportion to our correspondence with them. Let us also be generous and steadfast under our more ordinary trials, and we shall be strength-

* The cousin of the Blessed Virgin, so called according to the custom of the Hebrews, who gave the title of *brother* and *sister* to cousins-german.

ened under greater ones. Look back on your past life, and you will be convinced of this truth.

AFFECTIONS.— Let us admire and venerate, in the person of the Blessed Virgin, the *valiant Woman*, the *admirable Mother*, the *Queen of martyrs*, of Holy Scripture and of the Church..

RESOLUTIONS.— Let us be ever faithful and generous in the service of God. Thus shall we obtain from Him the grace of perseverance.

POINT II

“When Jesus therefore had seen His Mother and the disciple standing whom He loved, He saith to His Mother, Woman, behold thy Son.” (St. John 19:26.)

CONSIDERATION.— Admire the calmness of Jesus, who forgets Himself in the midst of His agony, to recommend her to the care of His virgin disciple, who was henceforth to sustain and console her to the end of her life. “Woman, behold your Son!” and at that moment He filled the heart of the beloved St. John to overflowing with the tenderest and most generous love that ever son felt for this admirable Mother.

APPLICATION.— Here our Lord teaches us to rise above our own sorrows, or rather to put them aside and forget ourselves for others. Here also, He gives an example of the consideration due to parents from their children, whatever may be the age of the latter, or however great their own trials.

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for the spirit of sacrifice and complete self-denial.

RESOLUTIONS.— To console and rejoice the heart of the Blessed Virgin, in the persons of our superiors, by great docility, strict observance of rule in all its details, and promptitude in anticipating their wishes.

POINT III

"After that, He saith to the disciple, Behold thy Mother."
(St. John 19: 27.)

CONSIDERATION.— Our Lord, having cared for His afflicted Mother, bethought Him of His beloved disciple, and wishing to give him a last mark of His love, places our Lady from henceforth under his protection. "Behold thy Mother," are the words with which He turns His dying eyes on St. John; words full of consolation for us all, for the Fathers unanimously concur in believing that our Lord here used St. John as the representative of all the faithful, and that from this moment He filled the heart of Mary with an overflowing love for mankind, to the end that the *maternity* of Mary should be the most perfect image of the paternity which is in God himself.

APPLICATION.— Let us strive ever more and more to love and honor our Holy Mother, and to lead others to venerate her.

COLLOQUY with our beloved Mother. I will thank her for all she has done for me, for my preservation from so many dangers, and for the graces obtained through her intercession, particularly that of perseverance in my holy vocation. I will consecrate myself anew to her service, and beg of her to receive me as her child.

FOURTH AND FIFTH WORDS

OF JESUS ON THE CROSS

1st Prel. Imagine you see Jesus on the cross in the midst of the darkness that overspread the earth at noon-day.

2d Prel. Ask for the grace of love and compunction.

POINT I

“Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over the whole earth until the ninth hour.” (St. Matt. 27: 45.)

CONSIDERATION.—This miraculous darkness, lasting for the three hours during which our Lord lived suspended on the cross, can not be explained by any natural law, as the Jewish Passover was invariably celebrated at the period of full moon, at which time no solar eclipse can possibly occur. But the Jews remained unconvinced by this prodigy, as well as by the other extraordinary circumstances attendant on or subsequent to the death of the Messiah, although they had been distinctly foretold by their prophets.

APPLICATION.—St. Gregory the Great makes striking reflections upon this excessive blindness. “All the elements,” he says, “gave their testimony to their Creator’s advent: His birth was announced by a star; the sea became firm beneath His footsteps; the sun grew dark, the earth trembled, and the rocks were rent at His death, whilst those that were in Limbo returned once more to earth; yet still the Jews, harder than the very rocks, remained obstinate in their unbelief.” Alas! that there should be Christians whose eyes are blinded and their hearts hardened by sin no less deplorably than these Jews!

AFFECTIONS.—Let us thank God who, according to the Apostle, has “delivered us from the power of dark-

ness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love." (Col. 1:13.) Let us pray for great distrust of ourselves:

RESOLUTIONS.—To pray frequently for the conversion of the Jews, and of the many nations who still sit "in darkness and in the shadow of death." (Psalm 106:10.)

POINT II

"And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lamma sabachthani? that is, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (St. Matt. 27:46.)

CONSIDERATION.—These are the words of King David, who in the 21st Psalm, nine centuries before, speaks of the Passion rather as an historian than a prophet. Our Lord used them at this solemn moment to afford the Jews another proof that He was the Messiah predicted by the prophets, and as a proof to us of succeeding generations that His Divinity in no degree alleviated the bitterness of His agony.

APPLICATION.—"My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" This plaintive cry of a Son abandoned, it is true, but perfectly resigned to His Father's will, teaches us that His faithful followers must know how to support the withdrawal of sensible consolation, even when they are most earnestly promoting His glory; and also that in these moments of darkness they are not forbidden to cry aloud to their hidden Father, provided their will is entirely in conformity with His good pleasure.

AFFECTIONS.—Teach me, O Lord! to suffer much and willingly for Thee, and that without sensible consolation.

RESOLUTIONS.—To compassionate suffering souls. Never to reproach them for any complaints to which they may give utterance. To encourage them, and in

time of trial, to fortify ourselves by the consideration of Jesus suffering and deprived of all consolation, both human and Divine.

POINT III

"Afterwards, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, I thirst." (St. John 19:28.)

CONSIDERATION.— Our Lord had told the Jews that all that had been uttered by the prophets respecting the Messiah should be exactly accomplished by Him. "Iota unum non præterbit." "One jot shall not pass." Thus King David had said in the 22d verse of the 68th Psalm, "In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." Our Lord accordingly said, "I thirst," knowing that the soldiers would offer Him this bitter beverage, which, according to the custom of the time, was always at hand to quench the thirst of the sufferers. "Then they putting a sponge full of vinegar about hyssop, put it to His mouth." (St. John 19:29.)

APPLICATION.— After having considered the perfect exactness and heroic fidelity with which our Lord carried out to His last sigh the smallest details regarding Himself of which the prophets had spoken, what ought you to think of your want of care in your daily duties, your infractions of the rule, on the pretext that they are matters of little moment?

COLLOQUY with our Lord on the cross, suffering in so many different ways with so much constancy, generosity, and resignation, and giving you an example, as St. Peter says, "that you should follow His steps." (I. St. Peter 2:21.)

SIXTH WORD

OF JESUS ON THE CROSS *

1st Prel. Imagine you behold your crucified Lord uttering the words, "Consummatum est." "It is consummated."

2d Prel. Ask that you may be able to say the same words at the hour of your own death.

POINT I

* Jesus, therefore, when He had taken the vinegar, said, "It is consummated." (St. John 19: 30.)

CONSIDERATION.—Consider how truly our Lord at the end of His earthly life could say, "It is consummated; all that I owed to God my Father, in reparation of His glory; all that I owed to man, whose salvation is accomplished; all my labors, sufferings, and humiliations;" to use His own words, "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." (St. John 17: 4.)

APPLICATION.—How happy the religious or the Christian who on his dying-bed can say that he has faithfully accomplished all that God, his neighbor, and his holy vocation required of him: who since his entrance into religion has made God, the salvation of souls, and his own perfection his only aims; who has observed his rule, satisfied his superiors, and edified his community in spite of difficulties, sacrifices, and humiliations! Truly can he also say, "It is consummated; I am happy, I die content and full of hope." Can you speak thus? Look back on the past; death is the echo of life.

* We have endeavored to adapt this Meditation to the mystery of the day, the institution of the Blessed Eucharist, without, however, interrupting the reflections on the Passion.

AFFECTIONS.— Beg of our Lord to increase in you the desire, or rather the determination, to live henceforth as a perfect religious.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will endeavor to carry out this determination by correcting every irregularity in my conduct.

POINT II

“It is consummated.”

CONSIDERATION.— The sense of these words is best completed by those which Jesus had uttered some hours before. “*Relinquo mundum, et vado ad Patrem.*” “I leave the world, and I go to the Father.” (St. John 16: 28.) As if He would say, “All is consummated; nothing now keeps me in the world; I leave it willingly.” Those who have no attachment to the world do not regret leaving it. The Heart of Jesus had no attachment except for men: He had come into the world to save them, He loved them ardently, and now death is about to separate Him from them. How, then, could He leave them without regret! By a prodigy of ineffable love, He instituted at His Last Supper the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, and after dying for us, deigns, by means of this same Sacrament, to remain perpetually with us.

APPLICATION.— It was on Holy-Thursday that the institution of this wonderful Sacrament took place; the Church solemnly celebrates it not only in her office, in the gospel and prayers of the Mass, but in her ceremonial, which is peculiar to this day. In cathedrals the bishop, in communities the abbot or superior, alone offers up the Holy Sacrifice; the other priests receiving communion from his hand, after the example of the Apostles communicated by Jesus Christ.

AFFECTIONS.— Earnestly desire to celebrate worth-

ily this great anniversary; to communicate with extraordinary sentiments of piety and fervor.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will reflect frequently during the day on the great Mysteries commemorated.

POINT III

“It is consummated.”

CONSIDERATION.—There is no doubt that our Lord, in giving utterance to these words, had in His mind the great act of the night before, when He celebrated the Pasch with His Apostles. He had substituted, in place of the sacrifices of the old law and of the Paschal law, the sacrifice of Himself, which will last to the end of time. He had said, “With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you.” (St. Luke 22: 15.)

APPLICATION.—This, then, is the festival of the Christian Pasch; let us rejoice at commemorating it in the spirit of the Apostles, and prepare ourselves with suitable dispositions, renewing our acts of faith, hope, confidence, and desire.

COLLOQUY with our loving Saviour.

LAST WORD OF JESUS. HIS DEATH

1st Prel. Imagine you behold our Lord, and hear Him say, "Father, into Thy Hands I commend my spirit." (St. Luke 23: 46.)
2d Prel. Ask for a holy and happy death.

POINT I

"And Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." (St. Luke 23: 46.)

CONSIDERATION.— Let us carefully meditate, one by one, on these last words of our Lord, the same that the priest will use by our dying-bed. "My Father;" what sweetness dwells in that word! how well fitted it is to soften the bitterness of death, and to give confidence in the last struggle! "Into Thy hands I commend my spirit." (Commend signifies rather, according to the Greek text, deposit, or place.) I commend or place my spirit into Thy hands, into the hands which created it, which gave it to me, for a time united to a mortal body, to glorify Thee on earth: now death separates it from its lifelong companion, till the moment of the resurrection; and till then I commend it into Thy fatherly hands.

APPLICATION.— Try often to make use of this last word of our Lord, particularly before sleep, the likeness of death; that at the hour of death it may be in your heart, and so spring naturally to your lips. As you utter it, unite your thoughts and affections to those of Jesus Christ, who in commending His soul to His Father, as St. Athanasius says, commended to God also the souls of all mankind. "Cum dicit in cruce, Pater, in manus tuas depono spiritum meum, in eo omnes homines apud Patrem deponit ac commendat." (Lib. contra. Apol.)

AFFECTIONS.—In union with Jesus dying, commend your spirit to God, as you would wish to do at the hour of death.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will endeavor to acquire or confirm the habit of doing so every night when retiring to rest.

POINT II

“And saying this, He gave up the ghost.” (St. Luke 23:46.)

CONSIDERATION.—Thus dies Jesus, our loving Saviour, at the precise moment He willed to die, without suffering the agony He had previously endured * in the Garden of Gethsemani. He dies abandoned and calumniated, but His death is followed by an immediate testimony to both His innocence and His divinity by the centurion at the foot of the cross exclaiming at the sight, “Indeed this was a just man,” (St. Luke 23:47;) “indeed this man was the Son of God!” (St. Mark 15:39.) “The veil of the temple was rent in two from the top even to the bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent, and the graves were opened; they that were watching having seen the earthquake and the things that were done, returned striking their breasts, saying, Indeed this was the Son of God!” (St. Matt. 27:51, 52, 54; St. Luke 23:48.) Jesus is dead; but He has overcome death, and opened to us the gates of everlasting life. He is dead; but from His heart, pierced by the lance, flow the life-giving Sacraments of His spouse the Church, which is to bring forth till the end of time an innumerable multitude of children throughout the world. He is dead, His body remains nailed to the cross; but His soul, adored in Limbo, is filled with ineffable delights.

APPLICATION AND AFFECTIONS.—O body and soul

* See the Meditation of the first Sunday of Lent.

of Jesus! that have suffered so much for me, what can I do in return? I adore and bless you, and, recalling the words of the Apostle, that "Christ died for all, that they also who live may not now live to themselves, but unto Him who died for them," (II. Cor. 5:15,) I will endeavor, O my Jesus! to die more and more to myself, to the world, and to all that displeases Thee.

RESOLUTIONS.— If unable to spend the preceding night in prayer, I will at least devote the day of our Lord's death to recollection, penance, and remorse.

POINT III

"And bowing His head, He gave up the ghost."
(St. John 19:30.)

CONSIDERATION.— Contemplate the inanimate body of our loving Redeemer. Those eyes, that have shed so many tears of tenderness and compassion over sinners; that mouth, which never opened but to glorify God or to comfort man; those pierced hands, ever ready to aid and bless; those wounded feet, moving only by obedience, never weary of seeking His lost sheep. Oh! what glory in heaven will surround all those bodily powers used here below for the glory of God and the salvation of souls!

APPLICATION.— We should often make a particular examination on the manner in which we use our senses.

COLLOQUY.— A paraphrase on the prayer, *Anima Christi*, Soul of Jesus, sanctify me; Body of Jesus, save me.

THE BURIAL OF OUR LORD

1st Prel. Be present in spirit at the descent from the cross and the burial of Jesus.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to pass this the last day of Lent holily.

POINT I

“And after these things, [an hour after the death of our Lord,] Joseph of Arimathea (because he was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews) besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus. And Pilate gave leave. He came therefore, and took away the body of Jesus. And Nicodemus also came, he who at first came to Jesus by night, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight. They took therefore the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths, with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now there was, in the place where He was crucified, a garden, and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein no man yet had been laid. There, therefore, because of the parasceve of the Jews, they laid Jesus, because the sepulchre was nigh at hand.” (St. John 19: 38-42.)

CONSIDERATION.—Behold the mournful scene at the foot of the cross: the crowd and the soldiers are already gone, the three Marys and the Apostle St. John are left alone. How were they to remove the body of Jesus from the cross? Where find Him a sepulchre? And there was yet another and a greater difficulty; for it was forbidden by the Jewish law to inter the bodies of criminals until the flesh had been consumed, and for this purpose it was customary to cast them into an open trench. At length God sends two men to their help, two who before their conversion were weak and fearful, but whom grace has made bold and resolute: they mount the ladders, they remove the nails that pierce that sacred body. Their hands unfasten Jesus and place Him in the arms of His Blessed Mother; it is they, too, who aid this most sorrowful Mother to bind His sacred body in linen cloths, enriched with spices, and who place it at last in the

glorious sepulchre of which Isaias had spoken in prophecy, "And His sepulchre shall be glorious." (Isaias 11: 10.)

APPLICATION.—Consider here, how God acted toward His well-beloved Son; He who was formerly humbled and abandoned is now honored and cared for after death. So will God act toward us if we humbly and lovingly resign ourselves to His will in adversity. Have we done so hitherto?

AFFECTIONS.—I will offer myself to suffer, and even to die for Jesus, who died for me.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will endeavor, notwithstanding the additional cares inseparable from the eve of a Festival, to spend this day in holy recollection.

POINT II

"And the next day, which followed the day of preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees came together to Pilate, saying, Sir, we have remembered that that seducer said, while He was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command, therefore, the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day, lest perhaps His disciples come and steal Him away, and say to the people, He is risen from the dead. And the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said to them, You have a guard; go, guard it as you know. And they, departing, made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting guards." (St. Matt. 27: 62-66.)

CONSIDERATION.—Admire the providence of God in all these circumstances: in the new sepulchre, near where our Lord was crucified, hewn out of a rock, as well as the sealing of the stone and placing a guard; the precautions taken by His enemies making it impossible even to approach Him in His grave. Our Lord permitted it, to place the truth of His resurrection beyond dispute — a truth which is the basis of His Gospel.

APPLICATION.—We believe in an ever-working Providence: far be it from us to look on events here

below as chances or accidents; far from us that despondency which occasionally overpowers the most devoted servants of our Lord at beholding the temporary triumphs of impiety. It was when the disciples of Jesus thought all was lost, that their Master overcame the grave and confounded His enemies forever. Far from us also that melancholy which the sight of death or a funeral sometimes produces: let us conquer it by the consoling thought of the resurrection, from which we shall pass, as did our Lord, from death unto life eternal.

COLLOQUY with Jesus, whose body apart from the soul, but still united to His Divinity, reposes in the sepulchre. In spirit join the angels who praise and adore Him with inexpressible sentiments of love, reverence, and devotion.

THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

"This is the day which the Lord hath made; let us be glad and rejoice therein." "*Hæc dies quam fecit Dominus; exultemus et lætemur in ea.*" (From the Gradual of the Mass for Easter-Sunday.)

1st Prel. Behold Jesus coming forth glorious from the tomb.

2d Prel. Ask that the fruit of your meditation may be a heart filled with holy gladness. There are three great motives for this gladness.

POINT I

MOTIVES FOR REJOICING FIRST WITH OUR LORD

CONSIDERATION.—"Surrexit, non est hic!" He is risen, He is not here!" (St. Mark 16: 6.) Such was the greeting of the angel to the holy women who had come very early in the morning to visit the place where Jesus was laid. What joy must have overwhelmed their hearts at the words! what joy even now fills the hearts of the faithful when they hear them repeated in the Mass of this great day! *Surrexit!* He is risen! He, Jesus, our Father and our King, over whose sorrowful Passion we have been so lately mourning, "dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over Him." Conqueror over death and all His enemies, He rejoices in His glorified humanity, and all power is given unto him in heaven and in earth, even in hell itself. *Exultemus et lætemur.* Let us rejoice with Him and with His Church, who has this day thrown off her mourning garb, and changed her accents of lamentation for strains of gladness mingled with the oft-repeated Alleluia. "He is not here; for He is risen, as He said, Alleluia, alleluia!"

APPLICATION.— Here let us renew the holy gladness which was to be the fruit of our meditation, and which is one of the elements of happiness and progress in the spiritual life. All seems easy to us when in such dispositions; labors and crosses become delightful; we may be said to run rather than to walk in the way of perfection; and, best of all, our actions become more agreeable to God and more meritorious for ourselves: for, says the Apostle, “*Hilarem enim datorem diligit Deus.*” “God loveth a cheerful giver.” (II. Cor. 9:7.) Look back on your past experiences of joy and sorrow, and you will see the truth of this.

AFFECTIONS.— Congratulate our Lord on the glory of His resurrection, and pray that your heart may expand with love and spiritual joy.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will endeavor during this day to keep my thoughts fixed on Jesus risen, to rejoice with Him, and to render my happiness fruitful in good works.

POINT II

MOTIVES FOR REJOICING SECONDLY WITH OUR BLESSED LADY

CONSIDERATION.— No one doubts that our Lord first appeared to His Blessed Mother; but how can we form an idea of the joy that filled her heart at sight of this beloved Son, now as radiant and beautiful as He had been before disfigured by His agony and crucifixion?

APPLICATION.— The sorrows and joys of a mother are the sorrows and joys of her children. Mary is our Mother; so let our joy this day be as deep as our previous sorrow, and in proportion to the filial love we bear her. Let our joy go beyond this day, and produce in us all its holy and blissful effects.

AFFECTIONS.—*Regina Cæli, letare, Alleluia! Rejoice, Queen of Heaven, Alleluia! Ora pro nobis Deum, Alleluia! Pray for us to God, Alleluia!* That we may participate abundantly in the benefits of His glorious resurrection. Alleluia!

RESOLUTIONS.—I will endeavor this day, and during the Paschal season, to recite the anthem, *Regina Cæli*, with great devotion.

POINT III

MOTIVES FOR REJOICING FOR OURSELVES

CONSIDERATION.—What ineffable joy springs from this thought alone — that the resurrection of our Lord is the type and the pledge of the resurrection of each one of us! This is no pious belief; it is an express article of faith; “knowing,” as St. Paul says, “that He who raised up Jesus will raise us up also with Jesus,” (II. Cor. 4: 14,) and “them who have slept through Jesus will God bring with Him.” (I. Thess. 4: 13.) It is this that makes us cry out with the same Apostle, “O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?”

APPLICATION.—Let us deeply impress this thought on our minds, and we shall never suffer long from sadness: in all our tribulations of soul or body, let us say, I believe in the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.

COLLOQUY with Jesus risen from the dead, in conformity with the **AFFECTIONS** and **RESOLUTIONS** of the first and second Points.

THE WONDERFUL PREROGATIVES

OF OUR LORD'S GLORIFIED BODY

1st Prel. Represent to yourself the glorified body of Jesus.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to comprehend the perfections of our Lord's glorified body, and to have our share in them with Him on the great day of the Resurrection.

POINT I

THE IMMORTALITY AND IMPASSIBILITY OF OUR LORD'S BODY

CONSIDERATION.—As soon as our Lord's soul was reunited to His body, the latter received the property of impassibility. This body, formerly subject to all human infirmities.—cold, hunger, weariness, the pains and sorrows of death—became absolutely impassible and immortal; “*Mors illi ultra non dominabitur.*” “Death shall no more have dominion over Him.” (Rom. 6:9.)

APPLICATION.—How had Jesus, as man, merited such glorious gifts? By His death and sufferings, endured for His Father's glory and man's salvation. We shall receive the same gifts on the like conditions; therefore, why should we so greatly fear death? Let us sanctify our sufferings by accepting them, as well as death itself, with entire resignation to the will of our Heavenly Father, offering them up in expiation of our sins, and those of others, after the example of our Divine Lord. The more we suffer with Him, the larger our share in the wonderful perfections of His glorified body. Happy the Christian, happy the religious, who bears this in mind! How great will be his courage, how perfect his submission, under every affliction! Let us endeavor so to live that we may be of this happy number.

AFFECTIONS.— Make acts of faith in these consoling truths. Ask of God the grace to have them ever present to your mind.

RESOLUTIONS.— In all hardship and bodily suffering, I will bear in mind these words of the Apostle: "We look for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will reform the body of our lowliness, made like to the body of His glory." (Philip. 3: 20, 21.)

POINT II

THE SPIRITUALITY AND AGILITY OF OUR LORD'S GLORIFIED BODY

CONSIDERATION.— A *spiritual* body is one that has *spiritual* properties, such as the power of penetrating matter, of passing at a single act of the will from one place to another, at whatever distance; how, or in what way, we can not comprehend, much less explain. Nevertheless, such were the properties of our Lord's glorified body. He proved that He possessed them by appearing several times in the midst of the disciples, as St. John relates, although "*cum fores erant clausæ, propter metum Judæorum.*" "The doors were shut, for fear of the Jews." (St. John 20: 19.)

APPLICATION.— Such, again, will be the perfection of the glorified bodies of the just after the resurrection, and for all eternity in heaven. I shall one day partake of them; the hope and assurance of it are given to me by St. Paul in these words, "*Seminatur corpus animale, surget corpus spirituale.*" "It is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body." (1. Cor. 15: 44;) provided that I endeavor to live a spiritual life. "*Si facta carnis mortificaveritis.*" "If by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live," (Rom. 8: 13,) as the Apostle St. Paul expresses it. Does my conscience testify that I have done this?

AFFECTIONS.— I will rejoice from my heart, and endeavor to animate my devotion by dwelling on these pious and consoling considerations suggested by the mysteries of the Paschal time.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will ask myself frequently in the words of Thomas à Kempis: “To what end camest thou hither? Was it not that thou mightest become a spiritual man?” (*Imit.* I. Book, xxv.)

POINT III

THE LUCIDITY OF OUR LORD'S GLORIFIED BODY

CONSIDERATION.—Those that would walk securely in the dark must provide themselves with a light. For Jesus risen there is no more darkness. His glorified body is its own light. The splendors of His divinity, flowing from His soul to His body, have made Him more radiant than the sun at noonday. The Apostles had once before seen something of this glory, on the day of His transfiguration.

APPLICATION.— If I share the resurrection of the just, such will also be the radiance of my body; the more brilliant in proportion to the mortifications to which it has been subjected, and the labors it has endured for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

COLLOQUY with God the Father. Thank Him for the privileges granted to the humanity of the Incarnate Word, our beloved Saviour. Beg of Him grace to prepare yourself for *impassibility* and *immortality* by invincible constancy in your good resolutions; for *spirituality* and *agility* by facility and promptitude in penetrating the mysteries of faith and the secrets of the spiritual life; and in fine, for *lucidity* by the light of good example and edification.

THE MARKS OF THE FIVE WOUNDS

IN THE GLORIFIED BODY OF OUR LORD

1st Prel. Bring before your mind these bright and radiant wounds of our Lord's glorified body.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to understand the mystery of His retaining them after His resurrection.

POINT I

THE WOUNDS OF JESUS TITLES OF GLORY

CONSIDERATION.—A prince returning in triumph to his kingdom is proud of the wounds he has received in battle; therefore we must not be surprised that our Lord chose to bear in His now glorified body the marks of the wounds He received in His terrific combat against sin and death. There were, besides, other reasons for His choice. He wished to show us the esteem He has for suffering and infamy endured in the cause of God, and to encourage us to endure them likewise; for through suffering and humiliation only, can we hope to attain eternal glory and happiness.

APPLICATION.—It was from contemplating the wounds and the humiliations of their Lord that the Saints drew their generosity and contempt for the world; it enabled them to regard fame, honor, and pleasures as naught; to rejoice in bearing the livery of their Divine Master, in suffering as He did hardships, labor, and ignominy, stimulated rather by the desire of resembling Him than of acquiring merit by so doing. How do you imitate these faithful servants of Christ?

AFFECTIONS.—Beg earnestly of God that you may be able to say with the Apostle: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified to me, and I

to the world. For I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus in my body." (Gal. 6: 14, 17.)

RESOLUTIONS.—To bear neglect and contempt at least with patience and resignation.

POINT II

THE WOUNDS OF JESUS THE REFUGE OF THE UNFORTUNATE

CONSIDERATION.—Our Lord has retained these wounds also to remind us of what He has done for love of us, and to assure us of His never-failing protection. These wounds are ever open to receive and shelter us; they are so many eloquent voices pleading for us before the heavenly throne. How can He who sits thereon refuse His beloved Son whatever He asks?

APPLICATION.—We often complain of dryness in prayer, even in our visits to the Blessed Sacrament; of the little love, almost the indifference, we feel for the Person of our Lord; and of our powerlessness against our innumerable difficulties and temptations. And what is our remedy? Let us seek it in the wounds of Jesus; let us contemplate them; let us enter therein in spirit, and all our subjects of complaint will disappear. St. Austin says, "In every misery I have found no more efficacious remedy than the wounds of Jesus. Within them I rest in peace and safety."

AFFECTIONS.—"O bone Jesu, exaudi me; intra tua vulnera absconde me." "Good Jesus, hear me; keep me hidden in Thy wounds." (Prayer of St. Ignatius.)

RESOLUTIONS.—In all difficulties and temptations I will take refuge in the wounds of my beloved Saviour.

POINT III

THE WOUNDS OF JESUS A JUSTIFICATION OF PROVIDENCE

CONSIDERATION.— Our Lord has, besides, retained these wounds to confound at the last judgment the wicked who have not profited by His Passion, as well as to rejoice the elect, who have corresponded with the designs of His wonderful and merciful Providence respecting them.

APPLICATION.— We wish and we trust to be found amongst the number of the elect. Our desire and our confidence will be well founded, if based upon an earnest endeavor to form within ourselves the likeness of our crucified God. Then with what joy shall we press our dying lips upon the five wounds of the crucifix! How shall we rejoice throughout all eternity!

COLLOQUY with Jesus, showing us the glorified marks of His wounds; particularly of the wound in His sacred Heart, whence issue flames of love. Adore Him, praise Him, and express to Him the miseries and the desires of our hearts.

FRUITS OF THE RESURRECTION

1st Prel. Imagine you hear Our Lord saying, "Have confidence; I have overcome the world." (St. John 16: 33.)

2d Prel. Ask for grace to share in the abundant fruits of the Resurrection.

POINT I

THE RESURRECTION THE FOUNDATION-STONE OF FAITH

CONSIDERATION.— Our Lord made constant use of the miracle of His approaching Resurrection during His ministry on earth to support the doctrines which He taught; and it was decreed by Him also that all the precautions taken by the Jews only served to prove the stupendous fact more clearly. The Apostles besides perpetually brought forward the Resurrection as the basis of the faith they preached. "If Christ be not risen again," St. Paul writes, "then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." (1. Cor. 15: 14.) The miracle of the Resurrection is universally believed, and millions of martyrs have shed their blood in testimony of its truth.

APPLICATION.— How happy am I to possess a faith so clearly divine, and all the gifts and graces belonging to the religious state! Do I show my gratitude by my works as well as my words?

AFFECTIONS.— Acknowledge, in the words of the patriarch Jacob, your incapacity to pay the tribute of gratitude due to the divine generosity: "Minor sum cunctis miserationibus tui." (Gen. 32: 10.)

RESOLUTIONS.— I will endeavor, during this day, to perform all my duties with lively sentiments of gratitude and love.

POINT II •

THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD THE PLEDGE AND
ASSURANCE OF OUR OWN

CONSIDERATION.— My own resurrection to life eternal, to a life, if I only take care to secure it, of bliss eternal, is as certain as the resurrection of my Lord. In the words of infallible truth, “As in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.” (I. Cor. 15: 22.) “He who raised up Jesus will raise up us also with Jesus.” (II. Cor. 4: 14.) “Yet so if we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him.” (Rom. 8: 17.)

APPLICATION.— What consolation there is in the thought that this body, which I watch over with such care, will one day be given back to me endowed with new and wonderful powers! It will be immortal, with an immensely increased capacity of enjoyment, drawn from the contemplation of the Infinite. Death viewed in such a light is no loss, but rather a gain to the Christian and fervent religious, a source of the sweetest hope and inexpressible comfort.

AFFECTIONS.— A lively act of faith in the future resurrection of the body. “I expect the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.” (Nicene Creed.)

RESOLUTIONS.— I will often renew this act of faith, particularly when alarmed or saddened at the thought of death.

POINT III

THE RESURRECTION OUR ENCOURAGEMENT UNDER
LABORS AND INFIRMITIES

CONSIDERATION.— A man contemplates the falling to pieces of the house he lives in with the utmost sor-

row ; but if he learns that it is to be rebuilt more beautifully than before, his sorrow is changed into joy. Our body is the dwelling-place of the soul. It is not a very stable one, however ; in spite of all our care, sooner or later, it falls to pieces. It is a saddening thought, but we know that God has promised to raise it up again infinitely more beautiful, and that it can never again be destroyed. " If our earthly house of this habitation be dissolved," says St. Paul, " we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in heaven." (II. Cor. 5 : 1.) " Our Lord Jesus Christ will reform the body of our lowliness," made like to the body of His glory, (Philip. 3 : 20, 21 ;) " for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." (I. Cor. 15 : 53.)

APPLICATION.—If we never lose sight of such thoughts, we shall not spare health, strength, or any bodily faculty whatsoever, in the service of the sick, in the work of instruction, or in the severer labors of the priesthood ; and should we fall under their weight, and die still in the prime of life, we may say with St. Paul, " *Mihi vivere Christus est, et mori lucrum.*" " For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Philipp. 1 : 21.)

COLLOQUY with the Apostle St. Paul, who tells such beautiful and consoling truths concerning the resurrection of Christ, and on that which is promised to us.

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

A TYPE OF THE SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION

1st Prel. Imagine you hear the Apostle St. Paul saying, "that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life." (Rom. 6: 4.)

2d Prel. Ask earnestly for grace that, after Christ as your model, you may rise *spiritually, truly, visibly*.

POINT I

"The Lord is risen." (St. Luke 24: 34.)

CONSIDERATION.—The Lord is risen; He has left the grave; He has entered upon a new life more perfect than the first, and subject to none of its infirmities. So ought we at this holy season to rise from the grave of sin, imperfection, and tepidity, to a more perfect and fervent life, exempt from sin, and even, as far as possible, from those imperfections for which we endeavored to atone by penance during the holy season of Lent. "As Christ," says St. Paul, "is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life." (Rom. 6: 4.)

APPLICATION.—Examine yourself upon your sins, your habitual faults, the means you use to avoid them, and also those that you had best employ to begin resolutely upon a new life in conformity with the plan you laid down for yourself on entering religion, avoiding tepidity, the chief cause of your past infidelities.

AFFECTIONS.—Pray for light to discern the state of your soul, and for the grace and strength requisite to remove those blemishes and defects which disfigure it in the sight of God.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will devote myself henceforth to the task of conquering that particular fault which I find to be the chief cause of all others.

POINT II

“The Lord is risen indeed.” (St. Luke 24: 34.)

CONSIDERATION.—The Lord is risen *indeed*; not only in appearance, as Saul was raised up by Samuel; nor for a time only, as Lazarus was raised by our Lord; but indeed, and no more to die. “Christ rising again from the dead, dieth now no more; death shall no more have dominion over Him.” (Rom. 6: 9.)

APPLICATION.—Such should also be our spiritual resurrection, a resurrection *indeed*; a real passage from a life more or less tepid to one of fervor befitting our holy profession — to a life based upon the resolution to persevere in the grace of God, and to fall no more into our former state of faithlessness and languor, which, little by little, would lead us back into the sleep of death.

AFFECTIONS.—Ask, therefore, of God, through the infinite merits of Christ, a more resolute will, and a more generous heart, and a spirit of fervor and devotion, proof against all accidents and vicissitudes.

RESOLUTIONS.—To avoid with increased vigilance the ordinary occasions of those faults into which even good religious are liable to fall; such as long and unnecessary conversations; carelessness in the observance of special rules; want of mortification of the senses, of gravity, or of religious modesty, with others which your own experience will suggest to you.

POINT III

“The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.”
(St. Luke 24: 34.)

CONSIDERATION.—Our Lord put the fact of His resurrection beyond dispute by appearing to His Apos-

ties and His Disciples not *once* only, but several times, during the forty days He remained on earth. He allowed them to touch Him, and ate with them, thus banishing all doubts from their minds.

APPLICATION.—The third mark of our spiritual resurrection must be *exterior*. It must not be known only to God, but appear before men, our superiors, our community, our inferiors — before all with whom we come in contact. They must perceive the change in us, and rejoice at it: perhaps our former negligences and defects have annoyed or grieved them, perhaps even they have scandalized our neighbors: we must endeavor to edify them in proportion.

COLLOQUY with Jesus risen from the dead. Congratulate Him. Rejoice with Him. Lay at His feet the resolutions made during meditations. Ask of Him humbly, grace to be faithful to them, and to enter henceforth on a new life; more fervent, more fruitful in good works than that you have hitherto led.

THE SEPULCHRE OF JESUS CHRIST

BECOME GLORIOUS

1st Prel. Bring before your mind the glories of the holy Sepulchre.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to despise all that perishes in the grave.

POINT I

Worldly glory ends with the tomb, where heavenly glory begins — the inheritance of our Lord and of His faithful followers.

CONSIDERATION.— What is the portion of those men, seculars or religious, who made worldly glory the mainspring of all their actions? Nothing but the oblivion of the grave; and if their names be held in remembrance, “what do they gain,” as St. Austin expresses it, “by being praised where they are not, whilst they are tormented where they are now?” How different was the condition of our Lord from that of these men! He sought only the glory of His Father throughout His whole life. He died the victim of love, blasphemed and despised; but the greater His humiliation, the greater His glory. His glory began in the tomb. “His sepulchre shall be glorious,” (Isa. 54:16,) said the prophet Isaias. He left it to be crowned with the eternal glory of heaven; and it has been ever since the object of the honor and veneration of pilgrims from every part of the world.

APPLICATION.— Thus also the faithful servants of our Lord will be glorified, who have, like their Master, trodden under foot the glories of the world, and sought in all the greater glory of God. Unknown and despised by men, their sepulchre will also be glorious in the great day of the resurrection; and they too will leave it to receive a crown of everlasting glory. We believe this, and yet do we not often cherish, more or

less openly, a desire for worldly praise and esteem, even in the most sacred functions, even in our acts of humility?

AFFECTIONS.— Desire and pray that we may die to ourselves and to the world, in order to live only for God.

RESOLUTIONS.— To be indifferent to the applause of the world as well as to its contempt. Frequently renew this good resolution.

POINT II

The wealth and power of this world end with the grave, where the riches of heaven begin.

CONSIDERATION.— A great prince, feeling death drawing near, exclaimed, "To-day I have treasures, palaces, and an army at my disposal; to-morrow what will be mine? — perhaps naught but the horrors of the tomb." Such are the thoughts that overwhelm the dying who have placed all their happiness in wealth and power; whilst our Lord who passed His whole life in poverty and voluntary obedience, received in the tomb the fullness of life, the power of judging all men as their sovereign arbiter, and the empire of the universe. "Omne judicium dedit Filio; quem constituit heredem universorum." (St. John 5: 22; Heb. 1: 2.)

APPLICATION.— Thus also His faithful servants, who, after His example and for His love, have chosen poverty and self-renunciation, will be glorified. He assures us Himself that "every one that has left house, or brethren, or sisters, or fathers, or mothers, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundred fold, and shall possess life everlasting." (St. Matt. 19: 29.) Let us rejoice that we have listened to the Divine voice and followed the evangelical counsels; but let us beware lest, after having generously abandoned all that was ours, perhaps great possessions,

we do not attach ourselves to trifles. Have you nothing wherewith to reproach yourself on this subject?

AFFECTIONS.—Thanksgiving for the grace of vocation, particularly for the inestimable blessings attached to the vows of poverty and obedience.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will make renewed efforts to attain the perfection of religious poverty and obedience.

POINT III

The joys and delights of the world end with the grave, where those of heaven begin.

CONSIDERATION.—How unhappy is the fate of the man of pleasure at the moment of death! He has ever before his eyes the awful thought that terrified, and finally converted, St. Austin: "*Momentarium quod delectat, æternum quod cruciat.*" "A few moments of pleasure, and an eternity of torment." How different is the death-bed of the faithful disciple! He can say with his Lord, "It is consummated; the sacrifice that I made of worldly pleasures, and all that it has cost me, 'Thou hast turned,' as the Psalmist expresses it, 'into joy, and hast compassed me with gladness,'" (Psalm 29: 12;) and he can conclude with the Apostle, "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord, the just Judge, will render to me in that day." (II. Tim. 4: 7, 8.)

APPLICATION.—As long as we do not forget these truths, we shall count as nothing the sacrifice of every earthly enjoyment, secure of eternal enjoyment, in proportion to our sacrifices.

COLLOQUY with Jesus risen and glorified.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN

BEFORE AND AFTER THE RESURRECTION

1st Prel. Bring before your mind the joy of our Lady at Our Lord's first appearing to her.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to bear sorrow, so as to merit a share in the joys of your Blessed Mother.

POINT I

AFFLICTION OF OUR LADY

CONSIDERATION.—What greater grief can afflict a mother than to be violently parted from an only son? What must, then, have been the depth and extent of our Lady's grief during the desolate interval between the burial and the resurrection of our Lord! How long must the time have appeared to this most loving Mother, sighing for the Son so cruelly snatched away from her, and ardently longing once more to behold Him!

APPLICATION.—Is it thus that I, an exile from the sensible presence of my Lord, sigh for the moment when I shall behold His glorified humanity, and be eternally united to Him in heaven? Alas! no; and why? Because I know and love Him so little, because I am so attached to earth and to creatures.

AFFECTIONS.—"O Jesus! the comfort of a soul in its pilgrimage, let my sighs move Thee, and this manifold desolation under which I labor upon earth: come, come, for nothing else doth please me but Thou." (*Imitation*, III. Book, xxi.)

RESOLUTIONS.—Fear and avoid all irregular and even too sensible affections.

POINT II

CONSOLATION OF OUR LADY

CONSIDERATION.—Imagine the transports of the widow of Naim on embracing her son, miraculously raised from the dead and restored to her arms. Such, and even greater, was our Lady's joy when our Lord appeared to her after His glorious resurrection. Her delight was in proportion to the part she had taken in the sufferings and ignominy of her Son; and it was enhanced by the certainty that she should share with Him in like manner the glory and the happiness of heaven. And to her applies the prophecy of King David, "According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, Thy comforts have given joy to my soul." (Psalm 93: 19.)

APPLICATION.—Here we find powerful motives for rejoicing in slights and crosses suffered for our Lord, for self-sacrifice and continual mortification. These things, it is true, are hard and bitter to nature; but the joys of the resurrection will enable us to bear them, and will make them sweet and easy. Let us remember the words of the Apostle, verified in our blessed Mother, "As you are partakers of the sufferings, so shall you be also of the consolation." (II. Cor. 1: 7.)

AFFECTIONS.—Beg of God that in times of suffering you may be strengthened to endure, by considering the glory and happiness of the resurrection.

RESOLUTIONS.—In times of desolation, I will consider that God will not fail to reward my patience and resignation; and that trouble and sadness will be succeeded by peace and joy.

POINT III

ALTERNATIONS OF CONSOLATION AND DESOLATION
EXPERIENCED BY OUR LADY

CONSIDERATION.— We can not doubt that our Lord, who appeared so often to His Apostles, appeared still oftener to His Mother, always filling her heart with fresh joy by His presence. But these appearances were of short duration, leaving a desolate void in that loving heart. Thus, during the forty days between the Resurrection and the Ascension, our Lady experienced continual alternations of joy and sorrow, of consolation and desolation.

APPLICATION.— After the same manner does our Lord treat His servants. Sometimes He overwhelms them with His consolation and the sensible sweetness of His presence; then He, as it were, abandons them to themselves, leaving mind and heart alike dry. We, too, frequently experience these alternations of soul. Let us learn to profit by them, to grow strong, and to advance in the service and love of God, according to the advice of all the masters of a spiritual life. How far has our conduct been in conformity to such teaching? Have we anything to reform in this matter?

COLLOQUY with the Holy Virgin. Recite, meditating on the words, the joyful anthem, *Regina Cæli, lætare, Alleluia!* Rejoice, Queen of Heaven, Alleluia!

THE HOLY WOMEN AT THE SEPULCHRE

1st Prel. Imagine you see the holy women going to the sepulchre, bringing the spices they had prepared.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to grow in love, confidence, and generosity.

POINT I

THEIR DEPARTURE FOR THE SEPULCHRE

CONSIDERATION.— The burial and embalming had been hurried over on account of the Jewish Sabbath, which began on Friday at sunset: the holy women known as the three Marys — namely, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and Mary the mother of James and Salome — hastened to the sepulchre with the earliest dawn on the first day of the week, that they might embalm again with all possible care the body of their beloved Master. “*Maria Magdalene, et Maria Jacobi et Salome valde mane veniunt ad monumentum, orto jam sole.*” “Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Salome, very early in the morning come to the sepulchre, the sun being now risen.” (St. Mark 16: 1, 2.)

APPLICATION.— Who can refrain from admiring the fervor and courage of these holy women, who left the town alone, whilst all was still darkness, climbing the hill of Calvary, and making their way straight to the sepulchre, regardless of the soldiers guarding it? What made them so fervent and courageous? It was their love. Oh! if you loved as they did, how much you would undertake and execute for the glory of God and the salvation of souls! how perseveringly and perfectly you would perform your spiritual duties! and what

progress you would make! for love makes all things easy, and never thinks it has done enough.

AFFECTIONS.— Beg earnestly of God to enkindle in your tepid heart the fire of His Divine love.

RESOLUTIONS.— Endeavor to familiarize yourself with the favorite ejaculatory prayer of St. Ignatius: "Give me, O Lord! Thy love and Thy grace. With these I am rich enough; I desire nothing more."

POINT II

THEIR EMBARRASSMENT ON THE WAY

CONSIDERATION.— The stone which the chief priests and the Pharisees had placed at the door of the sepulchre, and sealed with their seal, must surely have presented itself as an insurmountable obstacle to the pious designs of the holy women. On their way they asked each other, "*Quis revolvat nobis lapidem ab ostio monumenti?*" "Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" (St. Mark 16: 3.) But nevertheless they continued their journey, occupied only with the single idea of paying the last duties to their beloved Master.

APPLICATION.— It may happen to you to meet with apparently insurmountable difficulties in the execution of commands, in pious undertakings, or in the practice of good resolutions: but do not yield to discouragement; imitate these holy women, and go on with a blind confidence, doing what you can, persuaded that God will supply the rest, if it is necessary for His glory or the good of His creatures. Do you act thus?

AFFECTIONS.— Let us thank God for having sustained us on so many occasions when we should certainly have fallen but for the assistance of His grace. Let us pray for unwavering confidence in His almighty power and boundless love.

RESOLUTIONS.—To accustom ourselves to have prompt recourse to prayer in all difficulties, and when tempted to discouragement.

POINT III

THEIR ARRIVAL AT THE SEPULCHRE

CONSIDERATION.—St. Mark relates of the holy women, that when they had come to the sepulchre, “*Et viderunt revolutum lapidem.*” “They saw the stone rolled back.” (St. Mark 16: 4.) God worked a miracle for these women who showed such persevering, ardent love. As they approached the sepulchre, an earthquake rolled back the stone that barred their entrance, and the soldiers on watch, struck with terror, “became as dead men.” *

APPLICATION.—Thus does God often come to the help of those that trust in Him, contrary to all the laws of human wisdom, and as St. Paul says of Abraham, “*Qui contra spem in spem credidit.*” “Who against hope believed in hope.” (Rom. 4: 18.) Certainly ordinary means ought not to be neglected; but confidence in the goodness and the power of God should rise above and often silence human wisdom. See how far you are imbued with such trust.

COLLOQUY with the Holy Women.

* St. Matthew records the event in these words: “And behold, there was a great earthquake: For an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and coming, rolled back the stone. And the guards were struck with terror, and became as dead men. And some of the guards came into the city, and told the chief priests all things that had been done. And they being assembled together with the ancients, taking counsel, gave a great sum of money to the soldiers, saying, Say you, His disciples came by night, and stole Him away when we were asleep. So they taking the money did as they were taught; and this word was spread among the Jews even unto this day.” (St. Matt. 28: 2, 4, 11, 12, 13, 15.)

APPARITIONS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD

ANNOUNCED TO THE HOLY WOMEN BY AN ANGEL

1st. Prel. Imagine the empty sepulchre, and the astonishment and joy of the holy women.

2d Prel. Ask to share their holy joy and their love of Jesus.

POINT I

THE ANGEL REASSURES THE HOLY WOMEN

CONSIDERATION.— The holy women, terrified by the earthquake, knew not what to do; but the angel of the Lord was there to encourage and enlighten them. “Fear not you,” said he to them; “for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.” (St. Matt. 28: 5.) Remark that the same angel who thus addresses the holy women had so alarmed the soldiers on guard that they had taken to flight. Wherefore this difference of conduct? Because the soldiers’ and the holy women’s presence at the sepulchre was due to very opposite reasons: perversity and unbelief had drawn thither the former, love and faith the latter. Remark, too, why the holy women are told not to fear. Because they sought Jesus crucified.

APPLICATION.— Whenever you are attacked by fear or disturbed by trouble, go likewise to Jesus crucified; kneel for a few moments before your crucifix, and you will speedily recover strength and peace of mind.

AFFECTIONS.— Shame and regret for having so often sought peace and happiness in creatures.

RESOLUTIONS.— In all difficulties and afflictions, I will have recourse to Jesus, pouring out my heart at the foot of the cross.

POINT II

THE ANGEL ANNOUNCES THE RESURRECTION

CONSIDERATION.— The angel not only reassures the holy women, but announces the mystery of the resurrection. “Quid quæritis viventem cum mortuis?” “Why seek you the living with the dead?” (St. Luke 24: 5.) “Non est hic, sed surrexit, sicut dixit, Venite et videte locum ubi positus erat Dominus.” “He is not here, for He is risen, as He said, Come and see the place where the Lord was laid.” (St. Matt. 28: 6.) Convincing proof! He is not here, He has left the grave. St. Luke adds, “Et ingressæ non invenerunt corpus Domini Jesu.” “And going in, they found not the body of the Lord Jesus.” (St. Luke 24: 3.)

APPLICATION.— What would be your happiness, how great the joy of your superiors and your brethren, if, risen spiritually with Christ, you were indeed changed — if your words and your conduct proved that you had left behind, buried as it were in the tomb, your evil habits, your many imperfections! It depends upon yourself: you must join your efforts *constantly, perseveringly*, to the Divine grace offered to you at this holy season with greater profusion than at any other.

AFFECTIONS.— Implore with fervor and full confidence the assistance of grace, in order that the precept of the Apostle may be perfectly accomplished in you. “Expoliantes vos veterem hominem cum actibus suis.” “Stripping yourselves of the old man with his deeds.” (1. Col. 3: 9.)

RESOLUTIONS.— I will strive to eradicate that fault which is most an obstacle to my spiritual advancement.

POINT III

THE ANGEL COMMANDS THE HOLY WOMEN TO PUBLISH
THE RESURRECTION ABROAD

CONSIDERATION.—“Euntes, dicite discipulis ejus quia surrexit.” “And going quickly, tell ye His disciples that He is risen.” (St. Matt. 28:7.) These were the words of the angel to his overjoyed hearers. See in them the loving-kindness of our Lord. All His disciples had fled from Him in His Passion. After His death, they had seemed to discredit the prediction of His resurrection by giving way to excessive grief, as if they thought His cause and their own were hopeless. But nevertheless our Lord hastens to console, to reassure, and to encourage them by the voice of His angel and the holy women, although they rather appeared to deserve neglect and punishment than such gracious favors. But Jesus only follows the loving-kindness of His sacred heart.

APPLICATION.—Acknowledge that it is to the loving-kindness of the same Sacred Heart that you owe so many natural and supernatural graces, whilst you have, during perhaps many years, grieved this Divine heart by your sins, and even since your conversion have loved it with so feeble and lukewarm a love.

COLLOQUY with our Lord. Regret and disown your past faults. Make a lively act of faith and devotion. Offer up your good resolutions. Acknowledge your weakness. Pray for help, etc.

JESUS APPEARS TO MARY MAGDALENE

1st Prel. Imagine Mary Magdalene in contemplation before the sepulchre, and then our Lord's appearing suddenly to her.
 2d Prel. Ask for a share in her faith, her love, and her joy.

POINT I

MARY MAGDALENE STANDS ALONE AT THE SEPULCHRE

CONSIDERATION.— Whilst the two other Marys return home to spread abroad the joyful tidings of the resurrection, “*Maria stabat ad monumentum foris plorans.*” Mary Magdalene “stood at the sepulchre without, weeping.” (St. John 20: 2.) Love kept her there rapt, as it were, above herself, and caused her tears; love for her Divine Master, the beloved of her soul.

APPLICATION.— Mary Magdalene here offers us an example of a soul in contemplation. If we look into ourselves, shall we not find that we are very far from imitating it, despite all the advantages we possess in living free from the distractions and turmoil of the world? How comes this? The *Imitation* gives our answer: “Because there are few that know how to sequester themselves entirely from perishable creatures.” (III. Book, xxxi.)

AFFECTIONS.— Let us humble ourselves profoundly before God at the thought of our vanity, our earthly desires, our worldliness. Let us aspire to a more perfect union with God, and to a higher degree of prayer.

RESOLUTIONS.— To renounce all too natural attachments. To follow the advice given by St. Paul to the Colossians: “If you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth.” (Col. 3: 1, 2.)

POINT II

TWO ANGELS APPEAR TO MARY MAGDALENE

CONSIDERATION.— Whilst Mary Magdalene, lost in contemplation, remained with her eyes fixed upon the sepulchre, “et vidit duos angelos in albis, sedentes, unum ad caput, et unum ad pedes, ubi positum fuerat corpus Jesu. Dicunt ei illi: Mulier, quid ploras? Dicit eis: Quia tulerunt Dominum meum, et nescio ubi posuerunt eum.” “She saw two angels in white, sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been laid. They say to her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith to them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.” (St. John 20: 12, 13.)

APPLICATION.— The only cause of Mary Magdalene’s deep affliction was the loss of the sensible presence of Jesus. How happy should I be if this were the only, or at least the principal, cause of my sorrows — the loss of that sensible presence which once made me rejoice in my vocation, and find such peace and consolation in the practice of virtue amidst privations and difficulties!

AFFECTIONS.— I will repent, and ask God’s pardon for the many times that I have been so sensitive to all material privations, and insensible to the loss of Divine grace.

RESOLUTIONS.— To endeavor by every means in our power to regain the good dispositions in which we passed the time of our novitiate.

POINT III

JESUS APPEARS TO MARY MAGDALENE

CONSIDERATION.—Jesus had been present invisibly whilst His faithful servant had been thus giving such touching proofs of her love and sorrow. He was pleased by them, and desired to reward her. “Whilst she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and she knew not that it was Jesus. She, thinking that it was the gardener, saith to Him, Sir, if Thou hast taken Him hence, tell me where Thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away. Jesus saith to her, Mary!” At that single word, she recognized her Lord, and threw herself at His feet, saying Rabboni, Master.

APPLICATION.—What consoling lessons may we not find in this apparition of our Lord! the first recorded in the Gospel. To whom did He appear? To a penitent sinner. How came she to merit so great a favor? 1st, by the generosity of her love; 2d, by her share in the Passion; 3d, by her ardent desire of seeing Jesus, and her perseverance in seeking Him. Let us also desire to see Jesus glorified in heaven; let us often tell Him that we love Him, and prove our love by our generosity in His service; and thus, whatever may have been our past faithlessness, we may be certain of a large share in His abundant favors.

COLLOQUY with Mary Magdalene. Congratulate her on having been the first, after the Blessed Virgin, favored with the apparition of Jesus risen from the dead, and beg of her to obtain for us from our Lord the same holy dispositions which obtained for her such a signal favor.

JESUS APPEARS TO THE OTHER TWO MARYS

1st Prel. Represent to yourself the astonishment and joy of the two Marys.

2d Prel. Ask for a share in our Lord's favors.

POINT I

MARY THE MOTHER OF JAMES, AND MARY OF SALOME, RETURN TO THE CITY

CONSIDERATION.—The angel had commanded the holy women to declare the resurrection to the disciples, but they were not all three obliged to return together to the city. Mary Magdalene remained, as we have seen, by the sepulchre, and the two other Marys hastened toward Jerusalem, where the disciples were hiding. "And they went out quickly from the sepulchre, with fear and great joy, running to tell His disciples." (St. Matt. 28: 8.) They too were rewarded, for they were favored by our Lord's meeting them, as we shall see.

APPLICATION.—From the difference between the conduct of Mary Magdalene and the other Marys, we may learn that it is not from any action, taken by itself, that we acquire merit and reward, but from the motive and intention which accompany it. Suppose that, having some spare time at your disposal, you make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament; one of your companions performs instead an act of charity, or employs himself usefully: your merit and reward will be the same, if the same love of God was the motive of your different actions.

AFFECTIONS.—Gratitude to God, who, in His infinite goodness, leaves us free in many cases to follow

our own inclinations; but who never fails to reward those who act from the motive of pleasing Him.

RESOLUTIONS.—To act on all occasions from the supernatural motive of pleasing God. Frequently to renew this intention.

POINT II

JESUS APPEARS TO THE HOLY WOMEN

CONSIDERATION.—The prompt obedience of the two Marys was extraordinarily rewarded. As they hastened on their way, “behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail! But they came up, and took hold of His feet, and adored Him. Then Jesus said to them, Fear not. Go, tell my brethren, that they go into Galilee; there they shall see me.” (St. Matt. 28: 9, 10.)

APPLICATION.—Admire our Lord’s goodness to His loving and obedient servants, the tender sweetness of His words, “All hail,” “Fear not,” and again, “Tell my brethren.” He calls them His brethren, though they had abandoned and even denied Him; thus showing His forgiveness and forgetfulness of their past guilt toward Him.

AFFECTIONS.—Admire the infinite patience of your Divine Saviour. Adore Him, casting yourself at His feet with the holy women. Make an act of love, and devote yourself forever to His service.

RESOLUTIONS.—To imitate, as far as possible, the wonderful meekness of our Lord, forgetting all injuries and returning good for evil.

POINT III

THE DISCIPLES DO NOT BELIEVE THE HOLY WOMEN

The disciples, when they heard the tidings brought by the holy women, treated them, in the words of St. Luke, "as idle tales, and they did not believe them." "Et visa sunt ante illos sicut deliramentum verba ista; et non crediderunt illis." (St. Luke 24: 11.) Yet our Lord had many times clearly predicted His death, and His resurrection on the third day. Were the disciples, then, obstinate unbelievers? No; but their faith was, as it were, in bonds. They doubted practically rather than systematically.

APPLICATION.—Have we not often been like them? We believe that God beholds us always, and in all places, yet how many things we do that displease Him greatly! We know the words of our Lord, "As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me"; and we judge, grieve, and despise our brethren. We are practical, not systematic unbelievers, as the disciples were. Whither will such a course lead us? what should we think of it? Let us reflect and resolve.

COLLOQUY with our beloved Saviour, who "was delivered up for our sins," as St. Paul says, "and rose again for our justification." (Rom. 4: 25.) Bless and praise Him. Beg of Him to raise us with Him to a new life, and to vivify our faith, that it may be fruitful in good works, and thus be manifest to all men.

THE APOSTLES ST. PETER AND ST. JOHN

GO TO THE SEPULCHRE

1st Prel. Imagine you see the Apostles on the way to the holy sepulchre.

2d Prel. Ask to profit by their example.

POINT I

THE APOSTLES SET OUT

CONSIDERATION.—The Apostles did not all receive the tidings of the holy women with the same incredulity. St. Peter and St. John, resolved to assure themselves of the fact by personal observation, quitted the other Apostles, and repaired together to the sepulchre. This fact is recorded by St. John, who, however, avoids, through humility, mentioning his own name. “Exiit ergo Petrus et ille alius discipulus, et venerunt ad monumentum.” “Peter therefore went out, and that other disciple, and they came to the sepulchre.” (St. John 20: 3.) They followed the impulse of reason and conscience, without troubling themselves as to what the others might say or think of them.

APPLICATION.—How happy should I be, if my conduct had been always like theirs, making God, my conscience, and the obligations of my holy state the rule of my life! Alas! have I not perhaps often adopted a course of speech and action at least irregular and imperfect, either from cowardice or human respect, and finding excuses in my tepidity? Examine yourself in these respects.

AFFECTIONS.—Let us beg of God to enlighten us and to give us strength and courage to act henceforth on all occasions according to our conscience, our rule,

and the desire we should have of advancing constantly in the way of perfection; and this without reference to the conduct of others, particularly of those who are tepid in the service of God.

RESOLUTIONS.— To correspond with the foregoing **AFFECTIONS**.

POINT II

AS THEY APPROACH THE SEPULCHRE, THEIR SPEED INCREASES

CONSIDERATION.— The gospel says, “Currebant duo simul,” “they both ran together,” (St. John 20: 4,) so eager were they to reach the sepulchre, and to discover what had become of their beloved Master. It was their love that thus gave wings to their feet, and made them not walk but run on their way thither.

APPLICATION.— Do you fulfill the duties that God and obedience enjoin upon you with the like promptness and energy? Are you faithful in the observance of rules, zealous in keeping the resolutions which, with the advice of your director, you made during your last retreat? If your conscience bears witness in your favor, it is a proof of fervor, and you may rejoice; but if not, have you not reason to fear—particularly if age or infirmities warn you that you are approaching the term of your days? Endeavor, while there is yet time, to spare yourself the horrors of that repentance which comes too late.

AFFECTIONS.— Let us ask of God the grace to comprehend the meaning of the reproach addressed by the Holy Spirit to the Bishop of Ephesus: “I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first charity,” (Apoc. 2: 4,) and to see how far the same reproach might be addressed to us.

RESOLUTIONS.— To repair our past neglect, and endeavor to increase in fervor as we advance in years.

POINT III

ST. JOHN ALLOWS ST. PETER TO ENTER INTO THE
SEPULCHRE BEFORE HIM

CONSIDERATION.—Although St. John, the younger and swifter of the two, “came first to the sepulchre,” he tells us himself that “yet he went not in,” out of respect for St. Peter, to whom our Lord had given primacy and jurisdiction. To their great surprise, all they found therein were “the linen cloths lying, and the napkin that had been about His head.” (St. John 20: 6, 7.)

APPLICATION.—St. Peter, it is true, had sinned grievously by his three-fold denial of his Lord; yet St. John did not fail to show him the honor and respect which were due to him as his superior. This should teach us not to look at the errors and imperfections of superiors, but to consider them as the representatives of God, bearing in mind our Lord’s words, “He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me.” (St. Luke 10: 16.) Have my thoughts, words, and actions been in conformity to this doctrine? This is a most important question.

COLLOQUY with the Beloved Disciple. Beg of him to obtain for us, as we advance in age, a continual increase of faith, humility, charity, and fervor.

OUR LORD APPEARS TO ST. PETER

1st Prel. Imagine the Apostle when he first beholds his Divine Master.

2d Prel. Ask for a share in the love and devotion with which he was filled.

POINT I

ST. PETER RETURNS SLOWLY FROM THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

CONSIDERATION.— While St. John returned to the city as swiftly as he had come, to tell all he had seen, St. Peter “*abiit secum mirans quod factum fuerat*,” “went away, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass,” (St. Luke 24: 12;) fear and hope, joy and sorrow, love and contrition, contending for mastery within his breast.

APPLICATION.— What an example for you! Often you are alone, either working, or traveling from one place to another in town or country. Oh! then, like St. Peter, occupy yourself with some mystery of faith, or go over your morning meditation, thereby preparing your heart and mind in a most favorable manner, for the reception of Divine grace. What a powerful motive to animate you! What efforts have you already made to familiarize yourself with this practice, and with what success?

AFFECTIONS.— Shame and regret at finding yourself habitually so little recollected, so seldom occupied with pious thoughts, or imperfect as to your inner life.

RESOLUTIONS.— To strive to acquire a habit of recollection, and the spirit of the interior life.

POINT II

OUR LORD SHOWS HIMSELF TO ST. PETER

CONSIDERATION.—“Visus est Petro et deinde undecim,” “He was seen by Cephas, and after that by the eleven.” (1. Cor. 15:5.) St. Paul here leaves no doubt that St. Peter—to whom our Lord gave the name of Cephas, which, by interpretation, is Peter—was the first of the Apostles favored by the apparition of their Divine Master. St. John, the beloved disciple, had stood beneath the cross and received the last sigh of his Redeemer; but it was not to him that our Lord first showed Himself, but to Peter, who had publicly denied Him. We may well believe that this apparition was accompanied by the most tender and reassuring words, designed to convince the penitent Apostle of his Lord’s full forgiveness of the past.

APPLICATION.—What conclusion should we draw from our Lord’s behavior to St. Peter? That God pardons as God—that is to say, *entirely*, without *reserve*, or *remembrance of the past*. He loves and even caresses the sinner, as if He had never offended Him. “For the gifts of God are without repentance,” as St. Augustine says.

AFFECTIONS.—Recite fervently these words of the penitent King: “Bless the Lord, O my soul, who forgiveth all thy iniquities, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with mercy and compassion.” (Psalm 102:2, 3, 4.)

RESOLUTIONS.—Never despair of recovering fully the friendship of God, even should you have the misfortune of falling into grievous sin. Banish all doubts as to the forgiveness of those sins which you have confessed with a simple and upright heart.

POINT III

PETER CONFIRMS HIS BRETHREN IN THE FAITH

CONSIDERATION.—Jesus was seen by Peter, and after that by the eleven. No doubt our Lord's motive in thus first appearing to St. Peter, who had denied Him, was, amongst others, to restore him in the opinion of the rest, and to preserve his authority amongst them as the chief of the Apostles. We see that St. Peter's testimony was at once received by his brethren, when they affirmed, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon," (St. Luke 24: 34;) and thus he fulfilled the mission confided to him by his Divine Master, "And thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren." (St. Luke 22: 32.)

APPLICATION.—Remark the goodness of the Lord to all of us and in everything. Let us praise and bless Him, and conform ourselves to His example. Thus, when it is our duty to find fault with any one to whom respect is owing, let us be careful to bear his position in mind. Unless it be necessary to repair a public scandal, never reproach such a one before others. Do not point out his errors in his absence, or even mention them in confidential discourse.

COLLOQUY with St. Peter. Congratulate him. Ask him to obtain for us a share in the sentiments of respect, humility, and ardent love which he experienced on recognizing our Divine Lord.

OUR LORD APPEARS TO THE DISCIPLES,

ON THEIR WAY TO EMMAUS

1st Prel. Imagine you see our Lord walking with the two disciples, unrecognized by them.

2d Prel. Ask that you may ever walk in the presence of God.

POINT I

THE TWO DISCIPLES ON THEIR WAY TO EMMAUS

CONSIDERATION.— St. Luke tells us that, toward evening on the day of the resurrection, two of the disciples were on their way, “Et ecce duo ex illis ibant ipsa die in castellum, quod erat in spatio stadiorum sexaginta ab Jerusalem, nomine Emmaus,” “to a town which was sixty furlongs from Jerusalem, named Emmaus,” (St. Luke 24: 13,) where one of them had some property. No doubt they required some distraction after the sorrowful scenes through which they had so lately passed; but the Passion and death of their Master was still the only theme of their discourse on the journey thither. “Et ipsi loquebantur ad invicem de his omnibus quæ acciderant.” “And they talked together,” says the Evangelist, “of all these things that had happened.” (St. Luke 24: 14.)

APPLICATION.— We are not forbidden to take relaxation at proper times, or to seek sympathy and assistance when wearied or sorrowful; these things are not even incompatible with the zeal which we ought to have for perfection. But where do we seek our distractions and our consolations? Very often, perhaps, in long and frivolous conversation; in dissipation of spirit; in light reading; or, in what is more dangerous, the pleasures of sense. This is a lamentable error. True con-

solution is not to be found in creatures, apart from God. Have you not found it so more than once?

AFFECTIONS.— Acknowledge and repent of your faults.

RESOLUTIONS.— To sanctify the rest and recreation permitted to us by a pure intention, and the recollection of the presence of God. To have recourse to Him, first in prayer, in all trouble and distress.

POINT II

OUR LORD JOINS THEM WITHOUT MAKING HIMSELF KNOWN

CONSIDERATION.—“ And it came to pass, that while they talked and reasoned with themselves, Jesus Himself also drawing near, went with them; but their eyes were held that they should not know Him.” (St. Luke 24: 15, 16.) Why did our Lord deign to join them? To correct their errors, to give them instruction and consolation, and to strengthen them in the right way.

APPLICATION.— Such should be likewise the aim of our conversation, even at recreation, with those with whom we live, as also with those whom we occasionally meet, at home or abroad. Charity and duty oblige us to try that they should be the better for our intercourse; or that, at least, they should bear away from it something good. Have we no negligence to reproach ourselves with on this point — habitual negligence, perhaps?

AFFECTIONS.— Excite in your heart an ardent desire to serve your neighbor, and to contribute to his spiritual welfare, particularly in familiar conversation.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will, after a conversation of any length, examine myself with regard to the faults I may have committed, and consider the means of rendering such interviews useful to others as well as to myself.

POINT III

OUR LORD QUESTIONS THE DISCIPLES

CONSIDERATION.—“And He said to them, What are these discourses that you hold with one another, as you walk, and are sad? And they said, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, and how our chief priests and princes delivered Him to be condemned to death; but we hoped that it was He that should have redeemed Israel.” (St. Luke 24:17, 19-21.) Why did our Lord, who knew the innermost thoughts of men, thus question His disciples? His design, in thus drawing from their own lips the false and worldly ideas they entertained respecting the promised Messiah, was to make them see their errors more clearly, in order to their perfect correction.

APPLICATION.—Let us learn from this, how we can best correct the faults of others. We too, should question them, drawing the avowal from their own mouth, and showing them the gravity and fatal consequences of the errors into which they have fallen. They will then be properly disposed to receive correction; it will be truly useful to them; and we shall have conferred a lasting and solid benefit upon them. Is this wise line of conduct yours or have you not rather exasperated those whom it was your duty to reprove?

COLLOQUY with Jesus risen from the dead. The AFFECTIONS and RESOLUTIONS of the preceding Points will furnish the subject.

ON THE GOSPEL FOR THE DAY

1st Prel. Imagine our Lord saying, "I am the good Shepherd."

2d Prel. Endeavor to learn the sentiments of His Sacred Heart, that you may conform your own thereto.

POINT I

JESUS TELLS THE PHARISEES THAT HE IS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

CONSIDERATION.—Our Lord uses this tender and touching figure to express the love His sacred heart bears us, and to draw to it the hearts of men. Imagine you behold a good shepherd surrounded by his sheep. What is his greatest anxiety? Is it not the safety of his flock? He thinks of them night and day, and is ever on the watch lest any mischance should befall them. His love for them knows no bounds. If, despite his vigilance, a single sheep wanders from the fold, he gives himself no rest till he has found it and carried it home; should there be any sickness amongst the flock, he tends them unceasingly; he devotes himself altogether to them. In short, his delight is to be with them, and to lavish every sort of care upon them.

APPLICATION.—Apply these considerations to Jesus, the Shepherd of our souls, and you will find that the ardent love and unceasing vigilance there described fill His heart toward mankind, but in a much more elevated and perfect degree. Has He not completely forgotten Himself for us? Did He not become poor to make us rich? Did He not deliver Himself up to death to give us life?

AFFECTIONS.—Let us make acts of gratitude to our Divine Lord, for so much love, devotedness, and self-

sacrifice, and express a desire to return Him love for love, sacrifice for sacrifice, and life for life.

RESOLUTIONS.— In all afflictions and temptations, I will have recourse to the Good Shepherd of my soul.

POINT II

“I know mine, and mine know Me.” (St. John 10: 14.)

CONSIDERATION.— What does our Lord wish us to understand by these words? He means to say that He reads the heart; that among Christians, and even religious, there are good sheep in appearance only, and in the eyes of men; that there are others who are in reality good sheep, and known as such in the All-seeing eye that can not be deceived.

APPLICATION.— Ponder these truths, examine yourself upon them, ask yourself if you are one of the faithful flock known to our Lord. The good sheep seeks his master's company. Do you love to be with Jesus, and to visit Him often in the Blessed Sacrament? The sheep knows and follows the master's voice. Do you know and follow it likewise when He speaks through holy inspirations, or through your superiors and your rules? The good sheep is known by gentleness, simplicity, and openness. Are not you prone to envy, bitterness, and dissimulation? Answer these questions truly, and you will see what you ought to do.

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for grace to value daily more, and to perfect in yourself, those virtues which entitle you to a place in the flock of the Divine Shepherd.

RESOLUTIONS.— To endeavor to conquer those faults which would exclude you from that flock.

POINT III

"And I lay down My life for My sheep." (St. John 10: 15.)

CONSIDERATION.—Our Lord tells us, "*Mercenarius, cujus non sunt oves propriæ, videt lupum venientem, et dimittit oves, et fugit,*" "that the hireling, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and flieth." (St. John 10: 12.) That is, he is faithful only as long as neither trouble nor sacrifice is demanded of him; whilst the good Shepherd, on the contrary, "*animam suam dat pro ovibus suis,*" "giveth His life for the sheep." (St. John 10: 11.)

APPLICATION.—What a contrast between the conduct of the hireling and that of the Good Shepherd! The hireling thinks of nothing but of his own interest and of himself; whilst the other acts from motives of supernatural love. Our Lord uses the hireling as a type of the Pharisees, who noised their good actions abroad, "*ut honorificentur ab hominibus,*" "that they may be honored by men." (St. Matt. 6: 2.) He speaks of Himself under the figure of the Good Shepherd, seeking only and in everything the glory of His Heavenly Father. Examine yourself, your intentions, the motives of your speech and actions, and take some generous resolutions for the future. Humbly ask that you may be faithful to them.

COLLOQUY with the Divine and beloved Pastor of your soul.

JESUS REPRIMANDS AND INSTRUCTS

THE TWO DISCIPLES

1st Prel. Imagine you see Jesus speaking to the two disciples of Emmaus.

2d Prel. Ask that you may profit by the lessons our Lord gives His disciples.

POINT I

OUR LORD REPROACHES THE DISCIPLES WITH THEIR INCREDULITY

CONSIDERATION.—Our Lord, having drawn the avowal of their prejudices and their incredulity from the lips of the two disciples themselves, severely reproves them thus: “O foolish, and slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken.” (St. Luke 24:25.) This was severe, but it was neither bitter nor in anger; the disciples received it with humility and without remark, for they felt that it was dictated by charity.

APPLICATION.—Nothing is more fatal than the acquisition of bad habits; they little by little so become part of ourselves, that it is only with difficulty we can correct them. “*Habitus fit altera natura.*” “Habit becomes second nature,” said St. Augustine. The religious need not fear this danger; vigilant and charitable superiors warn him of his omissions in time, and, if necessary, rebuke him energetically, so that he may see the evil of his way before it is too late, and correct himself. This is a great advantage; let us appreciate it as it deserves, and not imitate the sick man who gets angry with the surgeon, who, to cure him, is often obliged to cause him pain. Receive correction accord-

ing to your rule, and, as the two disciples did, without reply, humbly or rather gratefully, with the sincere desire of amendment. Have you acted thus?

AFFECTIONS.— Thank God for the grace of your vocation, and for all the blessings that you derive from it. Beg that you may constantly profit of these graces.

RESOLUTIONS.— Should I at any time manifest resentment on being reprov'd, I will without delay apologize for it to my superior, and will beg of him to continue his interest toward me.

POINT II

OUR LORD UNDECEIVES AND INSTRUCTS THE DISCIPLES

CONSIDERATION.— That correction may be of real service, it is necessary that the person blamed should feel that he is in the wrong, and for this he requires instruction. This was our Lord's mode of proceeding with the two disciples, showing them that the prophecies concerning the Messiah entirely contradict their prejudices, and establish His reign upon self-abnegation and humility. “*Nonne hæc oportuit pati Christum, et ita intrare in gloriam suam?*” “Ought not Christ,” He says, “to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory?” (St. Luke 24: 26.)

APPLICATION.— Thus we clearly see the only road which leads to eternal salvation pointed out by the Infallible Word Himself—the way of the cross. Should I think myself wiser, that I deserve to fare better, than my Master; that I can gain an immortal crown without struggle or suffering, by leading a soft and idle life? Would not this be the height of absurdity?

AFFECTIONS.— Let us deplore our past errors and follies. Let us thank God for the grace of our vocation, which has opened our eyes to the truth; and hum-

ble ourselves profoundly at the feet of our Lord for having done and suffered so little for His love.

RESOLUTIONS.—To resume with increased fervor those practices of penance and mortification which we undertook with the approbation of our spiritual director.

POINT III

JESUS EXPLAINS THE MEANING OF THE SCRIPTURES TO THE TWO DISCIPLES

CONSIDERATION.—“And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things that were concerning Him.” (St. Luke 24: 27.) Wherefore did our Lord, who might have enlightened the minds of the two disciples by a single ray of His grace, enter into this long exposition of the prophetic writers? To teach us that we are to obtain and preserve the light and unction of divine grace by diligently reading the Holy Scriptures and spiritual books.

APPLICATION.—Is not your neglect of or carelessness in spiritual reading the cause of your want of faith and light, even in Holy Communion? Examine yourself; and if you feel the accusation just, resolve to correct yourself in so important a point of spiritual life. A practice not to be despised because it excites attention, is that of opening at hazard the *Imitation of Christ*, and reading the chapter which first meets the eye. Often sentences are met with which suit our taste of soul.

COLLOQUY with our Beloved Saviour, our Divine Guide, and Charitable Preceptor.

THE DISCIPLES CONSTRAIN OUR LORD

TO REMAIN WITH THEM, AND SHARE THEIR
HOSPITALITY

1st Prel. Imagine the three travelers at the entrance of Emmaus.

2d Prel. Ask our Lord to enter into our hearts as a guest, and to prepare them to receive Him fittingly.

POINT I

JESUS MADE AS THOUGH HE WOULD GO FARTHER

CONSIDERATION.—“And they drew nigh to the town whither they were going; and He made as though He would go farther.” (St. Luke 24: 28.) Nevertheless, our Lord fully intended to confer on these disciples the wonderful privilege of becoming their guest, and of making Himself known to them that very day; but He desired that this favor should be granted only at their pressing invitation.

APPLICATION.—God willingly comes and enters into your soul, takes up His dwelling there, and manifests His presence by heavenly graces and favors. “*Deliciæ meæ esse cum filiis hominum.*” “My delight is to be with the children of men,” (Prov. 8: 31;) but He will be sought for and invited with fervor and perseverance. Therefore, if it seems to you that He is far from you, and that your soul is void of those movements of grace His presence creates, ask yourself if you and your tepidity and reserve toward Him are not the cause.

AFFECTIONS.—Acknowledge and repent of your past coldness and tepidity. Ask God’s pardon. Pray and entreat of our Lord to prepare your heart for His coming.

RESOLUTIONS.—To serve God with great fervor during this day.

POINT II

THE DISCIPLES CONSTRAIN OUR LORD TO REMAIN WITH THEM

CONSIDERATION.—The disciples — whose hearts had burned within them on the way, during the discourse of the unknown pilgrim who had joined them — entreated Him not to leave them on their arrival at their destination. From entreaty they proceeded to argument: “*Et coegerunt illum, dicentes: Mane nobiscum, quoniam advesperascit, et inclinata est jam dies. Et intravit cum illis.*” “Stay with us,” they said, “because it is toward evening, and the day is now far spent”; adding action to word, “they constrained Him,” as the gospel expresses it. “And He went in with them.” (St. Luke 24: 29.)

APPLICATION.—The practical conclusion we may draw is this: that, if we wish to correct our spiritual insensibility, and to draw our Lord and His sensible graces into our souls, we must use a sort of holy violence toward Him; redoubling, at certain particular seasons, our devout practices and mortifications, till, like the disciples, we constrain Him to yield to our desires. Like them, we may urge “that it is now toward evening;” and “that the day (of our life) is now far spent,” and tending, perhaps without our suspecting it, toward its decline.

AFFECTIONS.—“Remain with us, Lord. For with Thee is the fountain of life.” (Psalm 35: 10.) Thou art “the Way, and the Truth, and the Life.” (St. John 14: 6.)

RESOLUTIONS.—Often ask the grace to experience the effects of the sensible presence of Jesus.

POINT III

JESUS YIELDS TO THEIR ENTREATIES

CONSIDERATION.—The entreaties of the disciples, and the gentle violence they used toward Him, pleased their Divine Lord. He yielded, and went in with them. They were full of joy, and did their best to show Him hospitality; yet still they knew not the dignity of their guest. What would they have done had they known?

APPLICATION.—But I know the guest whom I receive into my heart at Holy Communion. How ought I to receive Him? how prepare for His reception? What do I do to awaken in my soul the sentiments which Jesus wishes to find there? Sentiments of a lively faith, profound humility, ardent charity, and filial confidence. Does the thought of Holy Communion occupy my mind from morning until night? How have I prepared for it hitherto? What ought I to do in future?

COLLOQUY with Jesus Christ, really present, but hidden from our eyes in the Blessed Sacrament.

OUR LORD MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN TO THE DISCIPLES

1st Prel. Imagine our Lord seated at table with the two disciples, at the moment He makes Himself known.

2d Prel. Beg for grace to share the happiness they enjoyed at that moment.

POINT I

THEY KNEW THEIR LORD IN THE BREAKING OF BREAD

CONSIDERATION.—"And it came to pass, whilst He was at table with them, He took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to them." (St. Luke 24:30.) The generality of commentators maintain that our Lord gave them His Divine Self, under the appearance of bread, in the same manner as at His last Supper. As soon as they had received, the gospel adds, "*Aperti sunt oculi eorum, et cognoverunt eum.*" "Their eyes were opened, and they knew Him." (St. Luke 24:31.) This was, as it ever is, the effect of the Holy Eucharist, to enlighten the understanding, and fill it with the knowledge of God and Divine things.

APPLICATION.—But if so, how comes it that I, having so often received this same Eucharist, am still so unenlightened, and have made so little progress in the knowledge of Divine things and the ways of God? Doubtless because my dispositions have not been what they should be, and that my preparation or thanksgiving has been negligent.

AFFECTIONS.—Thank God for the graces which you have received in the Holy Communion, notwithstanding the imperfect dispositions with which you frequently approach Him.

RESOLUTIONS.— To examine yourself on the faults committed with regard to the Holy Communion, and endeavor henceforth to remedy them.

• POINT II

OUR LORD VANISHES OUT OF THEIR SIGHT

CONSIDERATION.— No sooner had the disciples known their Lord in the breaking of bread, than "*Et ipse evanuit ex oculis eorum.*" "He vanished out of their sight." (St. Luke 24:31.) Thus, to their sorrow, they lost His sensible presence, though they still felt its effects.

APPLICATION.— It may be asked, why our Lord vanished so speedily out of His disciples' sight without waiting for any act of adoration or of gratitude from them. Ascetic writers reply, "Perhaps to teach us that, after having performed a good action, we ought to avoid rather than seek thanks and praise for it. Perhaps, again, to show us that we ought not to count upon the sweetness of the sensible presence of Jesus, which is only a transitory consolation granted us in this valley of tears." Are you not habitually too sensitive to slights from your companions, and too little sensitive to the deprivation of Divine favors?

AFFECTIONS.— Learn to despise the esteem as well as the censure of the world. Resign yourself to the will of God, should He see fit to deprive you of the sensible effects of grace.

RESOLUTIONS.— To be generous and fervent in the service of God, that we may not be deprived, through our own fault, of the lights and consolations of grace.

POINT III

THE DISCIPLES RETURN IN HASTE TO JERUSALEM

CONSIDERATION.— After having received this wonderful favor, the two disciples, in the words of the gospel, “*Et surgentes eadem hora regressi sunt in Jerusalem; et invenerunt congregatos undecim et eos, qui cum illis erant,*” “rising up the same hour, they went back to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven gathered together, and those that were with them.” (St. Luke 24: 33.) Why did they go with such speed, when it was growing late, and they were already fatigued by their journey? To glorify their Divine Master, to make known His resurrection to their brethren without delay, and repair the scandal they had given by refusing to believe the testimony of ocular witnesses.

APPLICATION.— This consideration ought to induce us 1st, to desire ardently the intimate communings which we have with our Lord in meditation. How are we disposed in this regard? 2dly, it ought to give us an insatiable longing to receive Holy Communion, seeing that it worked such wonders in the persons of the disciples at Emmaus; and 3dly, it ought to remind us of the obligation of repairing promptly and generously the scandal we may have given.

COLLOQUY with our Lord. Thank Him for the many graces received in prayer and in the Holy Communion. Beg earnestly of Him that in the Most Holy Sacrament we may always find light, strength, and supernatural consolation.

JESUS APPEARS TO THE APOSTLES

AND DISCIPLES GATHERED TOGETHER

•
1st Prel. Picture the surprise and joy of the Apostles at the sight of Jesus.

2d Prel. Ask for an increase of veneration, love, and devotion for our Lord's person.

POINT I

JESUS APPEARS IN THE MIDST OF THEM WHEN THE
DOORS WERE SHUT

CONSIDERATION.—“ Now when it was late that same day, the first of the week, and the doors were shut where the disciples were gathered together, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst of them, and said to them, Peace be to you.” (St. John 20: 19.) Remark the moment that the Lord appeared to the apostles and disciples. It was when they were assembled together in recollection and retirement, strongly united by the ties of brotherly love, speaking together of Him, desiring to see Him, and on their guard against their enemies.

APPLICATION.— If you wish God to communicate Himself to you, 1st, preserve peace and union with your brethren, do not withdraw yourself from the community; 2d, be habitually recollected, only occupied with the thought of God; 3d, familiarize yourself with ejaculatory prayer, by which you ask Him to come to you; 4th, love to speak of the things of God; 5th, cherish a wholesome fear within yourself, and watch over your senses. Do you act thus?

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for grace to discern and surmount those obstacles which impede your intimate union with God.

RESOLUTIONS.— To endeavor to spend this day in the spirit of recollection and interior peace.

POINT II

THE DISCIPLES SUPPOSE THEY SEE A SPIRIT

CONSIDERATION.— Our Lord, seeing that the disciples supposed they saw a spirit, said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? See My Hands and Feet, that it is I Myself; handle and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see Me to have. And when He had said this, He shewed them His hands and feet. The disciples, therefore, were glad when they saw the Lord;” their fears and perplexities all vanishing at the sight of their Lord, giving place to feelings of complete joy and confidence.

APPLICATION.— The effects of the presence of God within the soul, and the certain marks of the good Spirit, are peace, calmness, and holy joy, which fill the heart, detach it from creatures, and make us properly appreciate the happiness of giving one’s self to God by the three vows of religion. How blessed the religious whom his Lord thus deigns to visit!

AFFECTIONS.— “Come, my God, come; for Thou art my joy, and without Thee, nothing can satisfy me.” (*Imit. of Christ*, III. Book, 21.)

RESOLUTIONS.— I will endeavor during this day to keep constantly before me our Lord Jesus Christ, showing the wounds in His hands, His feet, and His side.

POINT III

OUR LORD EATS BEFORE THE DISCIPLES

CONSIDERATION.—"But while they yet believed not, and wondered for joy, He said, Have you here anything to eat? And they offered Him a piece of a broiled fish and a honeycomb; and when He had eaten before them, taking the remains, He gave to them." (St. Luke 24: 41-43.) Remark here the goodness of our Lord. He condescends to an action which seems unbefitting His glorified Body, that He may fully convince His followers of the truth of His resurrection—that glorious truth upon which that gospel rests which they were called to preach to the whole world.

APPLICATION.—Let us learn, from the example of our Lord, not to be disgusted with anything, however humiliating and repugnant to nature, that is demanded of us in the service of our neighbor, and above all in that of our brethren. Let us try, too, to strengthen in them, as well as in ourselves, a lively faith in the resurrection and in the ineffable joys of heaven, to sustain and encourage ourselves under all the trials of this mortal life.

COLLOQUY with the holy Apostles, now associated with their Divine Master in glory and happiness. Congratulate them on having believed the word of Jesus. Beg of them to offer Him our good resolutions, and to intercede for us.

OF THE PEACE

WHICH OUR LORD GIVES HIS APOSTLES

1st Prel. Imagine you see our Lord standing in the midst of His Apostles and Disciples.

2d Prel. Ask for the preservation and increase of peace with God, your neighbor, and yourself.

POINT I

OUR LORD SAYS TO HIS APOSTLES, "PEACE BE TO YOU."
(ST. LUKE 24: 36.)

CONSIDERATION.— These words, "Pax vobis," "Peace be with you," are the first addressed by our Lord to His Apostles when He showed Himself to them on the evening of the day of His resurrection. Peace of the soul and of the heart; the only true happiness in this life. And He repeats the words three times in two successive visits. Why three times? To make us understand that there are three sorts of peace He desires for us — peace with God, our neighbor, and ourselves.

APPLICATION.— What value do we set upon that highest of heavenly gifts, peace with God? The answer is easy; this peace, we know, consists in the full and entire conformity of our will with that of God. His will is manifested to us through the commandments and counsels, the orders of our superiors, and our rule; all we need do, then, is to ask ourselves, How have we conformed our words, thoughts, and actions to these standards? with what eagerness, exactness, love, and generosity?

AFFECTIONS.— Pray earnestly for grace to comprehend and take part in the happiness of the religious who, in all things, seeks to know the holy will of God, and submits to it with complete abnegation of self.

RESOLUTIONS.— Carefully to shun all that would tend to disturb our peace with the Lord our God.

POINT II

OUR LORD AGAIN WISHES HIS DISCIPLES PEACE

CONSIDERATION.—“ And after eight days, again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be to you.” (St. John 21:26.) Peace with God should always go hand in hand with peace with our neighbors, particularly with our brethren and fellow-laborers. It is the fullness of this peace, based upon charity and fraternal union, that our Lord desired for His disciples. It was specially necessary to them, for the least division between them might have produced the failure of their mission, that mission which was to reunite all the nations of the earth by the ties of mutual faith, hope, and charity.

APPLICATION.— How happy those religious communities where peace, that fruit of brotherly love, reigns supreme! How unhappy those where it is not to be found! The two great conditions for preserving this peace are — 1st, to bear with the defects of others; 2d, to give others nothing to bear from us. How do you observe these rules? Are peace and union ever disturbed by your fault, by disputes, rudeness, susceptibility?

AFFECTIONS.— Gratitude for the grace of our vocation to the religious state, in which we are permitted to

enjoy that peace which we should perhaps have vainly sought amid the cares and distractions of the world.

RESOLUTIONS.—To do all in our power to promote the spirit of peace and unity in the community to which we belong.

POINT III

JESUS WISHES PEACE FOR HIS DISCIPLES FOR THE THIRD TIME

CONSIDERATION.—“He said, therefore, to them again, Peace be to you.” (St. John 20:21.) If we would possess in its entire plenitude the peace our Lord desired for His disciples, we must acquire *peace with ourselves*. This interior peace consists in the testimony of a good conscience, in the submission of the senses and passions to reason, and of reason to faith.

APPLICATION.—This peace can never be perfectly acquired in this world, where the flesh and self-love will ever rebel against the spirit and the will of God. The peace of our souls during this life must be sought in a perpetual and resolute combat against all our unruly inclinations. “It is by resisting the passions, and not by serving them, that true peace of heart is to be found,” truly says the *Imitation of Christ*, (I. Book. 6).

COLLOQUY with Jesus, the Author of all good, and notably the source of that inward peace on which we have just meditated. Thank Him for the inestimable blessing of our vocation to the religious state, wherein is to be found that three-fold peace bequeathed by Jesus Christ to His Apostles, that peace which the world can not give. Pray for grace to value daily more and more the incalculable blessings derived from it, and, as far as we are able, to lead others to appreciate them in like manner.

THE MISSION OF THE APOSTLES:

OUR LORD GIVES THEM THE HOLY GHOST, AND THE
POWER OF FORGIVING SINS

1st Prel. Imagine you see our Lord in the midst of the Apostles.
2d Prel. Ask that you may have a proper appreciation of the
gifts He bestows upon them.

POINT I

THE MISSION OF THE APOSTLES

CONSIDERATION.—Our Lord, having again given His peace to the Apostles, said to them, “As the Father hath sent me, I also send you,” (St. John 20: 21;) that is to say, for the same ends — to glorify God and to save man; and by the same means — prayer and preaching, in the midst of persecution, and every sort of obstacle; and with the assurance of the same reward: “and I dispose to you, as my Father hath disposed to me, a kingdom; that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and may sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (St. Luke 22: 29, 30.) What a sublime mission — to be thus the ambassadors of Jesus Christ, and to co-operate with Him in the salvation of the world!

APPLICATION.—This mission is ours likewise, the end of our vocation being nothing else but the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Wherever we are sent, our Lord says to us, through our superiors, “As the Father hath sent me, I also send you.” Do we comprehend the dignity of our vocation?

AFFECTIONS.—Praise and thanksgiving to God, who has called us to this holy and exalted state. Let us reflect with shame that we, who should dwell in spirit

in heaven, scarcely touching the earth, so to say, with our feet, are yet actuated by such unworthy motives, and subject to so many base and sensual inclinations.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will endeavor to comply with the precept of the Apostle: “If you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above.” (Col. 3: 1.)

POINT II

OUR LORD BESTOWS THE HOLY GHOST UPON HIS APOSTLES

CONSIDERATION.— The mission of the Apostles was as infinitely above their strength as ours is above our own. Therefore, as the gospel says, “He breathed on them, and He said to them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost,” (St. John 20: 22;) thus communicating to them mysteriously that Holy Spirit which is in Him, and proceeds from Him and from the Father, that, being dead to the world, they might live henceforth only by that Spirit — a Spirit entirely opposed to the spirit of the world, where all is self-love, pride, cupidity, and ambition; a spirit of self-sacrifice, humility; mortification, poverty, and charity.

APPLICATION.— Examine yourself carefully, and see if you follow and are ruled by the spirit of the world, or by that of Jesus Christ, and in what degree.

AFFECTIONS.— Examine yourself carefully, and strive to discern the spirit that influences and governs you, if it be the spirit of Christ, or the spirit of the world. Consider how far you are guided by one or the other.

RESOLUTIONS.— Excite in your heart an ardent desire to be of the number of those of whom the Apostle St. Paul says, “Whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God,” (Rom. 8: 14,) and consequently the brothers of Christ, associated with Him in the great work of the conquest of souls.

POINT III

OUR LORD GIVES HIS APOSTLES POWER TO FORGIVE SINS

CONSIDERATION.—Our Lord immediately continued, “Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.” (St. John 20:23.) By these words, our Lord bestowed upon the Apostles and their lawfully ordained successors the wonderful power of forgiving sins, without any restriction as to their number or heinousness. What goodness and liberality!

APPLICATION.—Let us try to understand all the value of this power. What hope of salvation would remain to us, without this second plank after shipwreck — as the Council of Trent styles the Sacrament of Penance — we who are so weak and so subject to temptation? How often have you thanked the Lord for instituting this Sacrament? Perhaps you have considered it a painful yoke or even abused it sacrilegiously. What fruit have you drawn from it; what have been your dispositions and preparation for it?

COLLOQUY with our Divine Saviour. Thank Him for the inestimable benefits that He has conferred on us by instituting the Sacrament of Penance.

FEAST OF THE PATRONAGE OF ST. JOSEPH

1st Prel. Imagine you hear Jesus saying, "Go to Joseph."

2d Prel. Ask for great confidence in St. Joseph.

POINT I

ST. JOSEPH PATRON AND PROTECTOR OF CHRISTIAN FAMILIES

CONSIDERATION.— St. Joseph, as the legal husband of the Blessed Virgin, was the head of the Holy Family. He supported them by the labor of his hands; he governed and guided them in obedience to direction from on high, manifested to him by the ministry of angels; and the Evangelist gives us reason to suppose that Jesus and Mary obeyed him strictly. It is no wonder, then, that he is looked upon and invoked as the protector of those Christian families who desire to follow the laws and conform to the will of God.

APPLICATION.— Every religious community is a family, and all the members of it look on the superior as their father in God. They live under the same roof, follow the same rule, and call each other by the name of brethren. The feast of St. Joseph's Patronage is, then, a special feast for our community. It reminds us of the gratitude and reverent devotion we owe to our holy and powerful protector. Let us recall to mind the trials, the difficulties, and the dangers of every kind, that the order to which we belong has passed through for so many years — perhaps even for centuries — and we shall have no doubt that it is owing to the protection of St. Joseph that it still subsists, full of life and vigor, while so many ruins are on every side of it.

AFFECTIONS.—Gratitude to God with satisfaction and confidence while reflecting that the Patron and Protector of the religious family to which we belong is the same who was on earth the Father and the Protector of the Holy Family.

RESOLUTIONS.—To endeavor to practice those virtues of which St. Joseph has given us the example, in order that we may please him, and gain his interest for the welfare of our community.

POINT II

ST. JOSEPH THE SPECIAL PROTECTOR AND PATRON OF CHRISTIAN YOUTH

CONSIDERATION.—The gospel tells us that the Child Jesus submitted to the direction of St. Joseph, and obeyed him in everything as well as Mary. “*Erat subditus illis.*” “And He was subject to them.” (St. Luke 2: 51.) We may say that he had charge of the education of Jesus as a child, youth, and young man. He enjoyed the greatest happiness a father can have — seeing Him increase in age and in wisdom before God and before men. We can not, therefore, doubt that St. Joseph takes a particular interest in, and extends a special *protection* over, children, and over those whose office it is to educate the young.

APPLICATION.—Perhaps your employment is to labor in the education of children and young people in schools and colleges. It is a glorious work, but also a most difficult one. You want to succeed in it. *Ite ad Joseph*, go to Joseph, and you will obtain what you desire.

COLLOQUY with our holy and glorious Patron.

POINT III

ST. JOSEPH PATRON OF THE DYING

CONSIDERATION.— St. Joseph is venerated by the whole Christian world as the patron of a happy death. Confraternities are established in his honor, altars are erected in his name, and in many places a special feast is appointed in commemoration of his blessed death. He has been chosen patron of the dying, and he may be called the Father of the Church; and his last moments were blessed by God in a special manner, since he had the happiness of dying in the arms of Jesus and Mary.

APPLICATION.— No doubt, you have often dreaded the justice of an offended God, when meditating on that last terrible day of judgment, and wished for a mighty advocate for that moment. Choose then, St. Joseph, who never fails to obtain for those under his protection the grace of a happy death.

COLLOQUY with St. Joseph as in preceding Point.

ON THE GOSPEL OF THE PRECEDING SUNDAY

1st Prel. Imagine you hear Jesus saying these words, "Amen, amen, I say to you, that you shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice." (St. John 16: 20.)

2d Prel. Ask for a sovereign contempt for every thing which does not lead to God.

POINT I

JOY OF THE CHILDREN OF THIS WORLD

CONSIDERATION.—When our Lord was about to leave this world, He said to His disciples, "A little while, and you shall not see me, because I go to the Father. You shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice." We see, then, how our Lord has portioned out the possessions of this life. To the good He gives crosses and tears; to the worldly, whom the Bible calls the "children of the world," He gives riches and material enjoyments. This is because, in His goodness and sovereign justice, He desires that the former should be purified by momentary sufferings from the smallest stains of sin; and that the others should have a passing reward for their naturally good actions, which have no merit in eternity, He gives to them the joys of this world. What a melancholy lot! They are apparently happy, but in reality very unfortunate; always tormented by the thirst for gaining something, and the fear of losing it; bending under the yoke of violent, disgraceful, and insatiable passions; tormented by remorse of conscience, terrified at the thought of death and eternity.

APPLICATION.—Have you always taken this view of worldly happiness? Have you not rather sometimes envied it, and said to yourself, "Why have I embraced such an austere kind of life? I could as easily have saved my soul while living in the world, enjoying my

liberty, taking part in innocent pleasures." If this be the case, it is to be feared that your faith has been growing weak, that lukewarmness has darkened your understanding, and allowed ill-regulated affections to spring up in your heart. A religious who is in this state runs great risk of losing the grace of his vocation, of falling into delusions, and of losing his soul.

AFFECTIONS.—Contempt and disregard of the false pleasures of the world. Gratitude for the grace of your vocation, which keeps you secluded from its wicked and deceitful allurements.

RESOLUTIONS.—Repeat often to yourself, particularly in any temptation contrary to the spirit of your vocation: O my soul! how fortunate thou art in being sheltered from the seductive snares to which so many fall victims.

POINT II

SORROW OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD

CONSIDERATION.—"The world shall rejoice, and you shall be made sorrowful." The privations, persecutions, and sufferings of every kind which Jesus Christ foretold to His Apostles as their portion in this world, make worldly men look on them as unfortunate beings, leading a most sorrowful life. They pity their fate because they do not know the hidden manna of the Cross, because they have never tasted the consolations and unspeakable joys which God gives to those who suffer for love of Him. The Apostle experienced them when he exclaimed, "I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation." (II. Cor. 7:4.) And St. Austin knew them when he said to those who pitied him for his severe penances, "The tears that you see me shed are sweeter than all the pleasures that I ever tasted in the world."

APPLICATION.—The word *tears* and *sorrow* were not meant by our Lord in the sense we commonly at-

tach to them. They mean the exact opposite of the senseless laughter and sinful joys of the world. "There is," says St. Paul, "a sorrow of the world, and a sorrow that is according to God." (II. Cor. 7: 10.) The latter affects the senses alone—it is only apparent; but in the depths of the soul there is joy, an unspeakable joy, a foretaste of the joys of heaven, of which the worldly cannot form an idea. "Quasi tristes, semper autem gaudentes." "As sorrowful; yet always rejoicing." (II. Cor. 6: 10.)

AFFECTIONS.—Thank God, who in calling you to the religious state has led you to the fountain of true and solid happiness.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will receive and accept in the spirit of faith all contradictions and sufferings to which I may be subjected.

POINT III

THE ETERNITY RESERVED FOR EACH OF THESE CLASSES

CONSIDERATION.—"I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man shall take from you." (St. John 16: 22.) These are the closing words of this day's gospel; and they assure us that the privations, the tears, and the passing sorrow of the *children of God*, will be succeeded by an eternity of joy and delight in heaven. Our Lord has told us this also in these words of encouragement: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." (St. Matt. 5: 5.) But the *children of this world* will have a different lot; their passing joy will be changed into tears and eternal torments. "Woe to you that now laugh," says Jesus Christ, "for you shall mourn and weep." (St. Luke 6: 25.) What a contrast! A moment of joy, and eternal suffering; a moment of suffering, and an eternity of joy and bliss.

COLLOQUY with our Divine Saviour.

UNBELIEF OF THE APOSTLE THOMAS

1st Prel. Imagine you see Thomas in his presumptuous isolation from his brethren.

2d Prel. Beg the grace of a wise mistrust of self.

POINT I

ISOLATION OF THE APOSTLE THOMAS

CONSIDERATION.— The appearance of Jesus to His Apostles the very day of His resurrection filled them with joy, consolation, and courage. They became perfectly happy. One of them only — Thomas — had no part in this happiness, because he was separated from his brethren, and was absent from the place where they assembled together for prayer. “Thomas autem, unus ex duodecim, qui dicitur Didymus, non erat cum eis quando venit Jesus.” “Now Thomas, one of the twelve, who is called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.” (St. John 20: 24.)

APPLICATION.— The religious who isolates himself from his brethren, or without reason is absent from the community exercises, runs a risk of losing many graces and special favors, and even of falling into sin. Have you not had experience of this? Whether you have or not, it is a certain fact that when a religious without a lawful reason does not rise at the same hour as the rest, does not join in meditation, examen, vocal prayer, and even in recreation with the community, he loses the special graces that God has bestowed on these exercises made in common. He is not where God wishes him to be.

AFFECTIONS.— I believe this to be the case, and the misfortune of the Apostle Thomas makes it now more evident to me than ever.

RESOLUTIONS.— To shun singularity, and, as far as possible, to join in all the observances of the community.

POINT II

OBSTINATE UNBELIEF OF THOMAS

CONSIDERATION.— Besides the fault of separating himself from his companions, Thomas was guilty of the most obstinate unbelief. Though the Apostles, the disciples, the holy women, and probably our Blessed Lady, assured him that their Divine Master was risen again — that they had seen Him, heard Him, touched Him with their hands — he would not receive their testimony. He obstinately refused to believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

APPLICATION.— A fault very rarely happens by itself, but is generally followed by a second worse than the first; and the second by a third, worse again than the preceding. Question your past life; perhaps it will tell you this is unhappily too true. Take care not to have this sad experience over again.

AFFECTIONS.— Beg of God to permit that you may be checked by remorse or salutary uneasiness when about to commit a first fault or infidelity.

RESOLUTIONS.— If only in order to avoid disputes, I will not adhere obstinately or even absolutely to my own opinion.

POINT III

PRIDE AND PRESUMPTION OF THOMAS

CONSIDERATION.— Avarice had led Judas to his ruin, and pride was about to cause that of Thomas. It led

him to imagine himself more enlightened than all his brethren, to treat them as weak-minded men, and obstinately remain the only one who did not believe. And with this intolerable pride he had great presumption. "*Nisi videro in manibus ejus fixuram clavorum, et mittam digitum meum in locum clavorum, et mittam manum meam in latus ejus, non credam.*" "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." (St. John 20:25.) He laid down the law for his Master; he dictated to Him the conditions of an act of faith in the truth of His resurrection, and exposed himself to His just anger.

APPLICATION.—We are justly shocked at the conduct of Thomas, but let us take care; we are not more infallible than he was; and if this Apostle, who had spent three years in the school of our Divine Lord, could thus err from over-great confidence in himself, we ought to act and speak with great circumspection. And how often have we been wanting in it! Let us thank our Lord for having preserved us from the evil consequences which might have resulted from our want of discretion and pride. Let us renew the resolution of being modest and circumspect in maintaining our opinions, especially when they are in opposition to the one commonly held.

COLLOQUY with our Beloved Saviour. Beg of Him to grant you distrust of yourself, and extreme horror of the spirit of opposition or of obstinacy. Make a resolution of watching over your words, especially at the time of recreation, and of avoiding all contradiction, unless in those cases where the interests of religion and charity, or the principles of religion, may be in question.

JESUS SHOWS HIMSELF TO THOMAS

IN THE PRESENCE OF ALL THE APOSTLES, AND OF
MANY OF THE DISCIPLES

1st Prel. Let us imagine this holy and solemn meeting.

2d Prel. Beg the grace of knowing your faults, and of making a prompt reparation for them.

POINT I

JESUS ENABLES THOMAS TO DISCOVER HIS ERROR

CONSIDERATION.—The first Sunday after Easter, Jesus appeared again, as He had done eight days before, to the Apostles gathered together in the upper chamber. But this time Thomas was with them. “After eight days again, His disciples were within, and Thomas was with them.” (St. John 20:26.) It was because Thomas was there, as the Gospel expressly mentions, that our Lord especially came; and why? That He might convert this unbelieving apostle, and bring back a lost sheep into the path of life. How good was our Divine Lord! He took the first step toward the sinner; for if Thomas had been left to himself, what would have become of him? He had already persisted for eight days in his unbelief, and we may reasonably imagine that he would have continued in it, and been lost for all eternity.

APPLICATION.—Have you not also, and perhaps more than once, passed a considerable time in habitual sin? and have you not been brought out of it, instead of being overtaken by death, through the mercy of God, who prevented you by His grace? “*Misericordiæ Domini, quoniam non sumus consumpti.*” “The mercies of the Lord that we are not consumed,”

(Lament. 3: 22,) says Jeremias. Can you not also say the same with profound wonder and gratitude?

AFFECTIONS.—Praise and bless the wonderful goodness, the love of predilection with which Almighty God has favored you.

RESOLUTIONS.—To endeavor to arise quickly from the miserable state of sin, should you, notwithstanding your good resolutions, be so unfortunate as to fall into it.

POINT II

HE ENABLED HIM ALSO TO REPAIR THE SCANDAL HE HAD GIVEN

CONSIDERATION.—It is a remarkable circumstance in this history, that our Lord would only appear to Thomas in the presence of the other disciples. His reason was, to give Thomas an occasion of repairing before them all the scandal and the sorrow he had caused them. “The works of God are perfect,” (Deut. 32: 4,) says the prophet. He bestowed on the Apostle the grace of a sincere conversion, and gave him also by His providence the means of making it entire and exemplary.

APPLICATION.—If you have scandalized or wounded by word or deed those with whom you live, or with whom you have some relation, seize the first occasion which Providence gives you of repairing the harm you have done; and if the reparation ought to be public, because the fault has been public, make it with a good heart, humbly and sincerely. You will not lose the good opinion of others. “To acknowledge we were in error yesterday shows that we are wiser to-day,” says the proverb.

AFFECTIONS.—Accuse yourself and repent before God of the bad example that you have unfortunately given to your brethren.

RESOLUTIONS.—To be more vigilant, especially over your words, in order that you may neither give bad example nor annoyance to others.

POINT III

CONSIDERATION.—He enables Thomas to do this without injury to his reputation. “*Venit Jesus, januis clausis, et stetit in medio.*” “Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst.” (St. John 20: 26.) The circumstance mentioned in the gospel —“the doors being shut”—contains not only a mystery, but a valuable lesson. Our Lord teaches us never to tell our neighbors’ faults except to those who have the right to hear them, nor to reprove any one publicly except before those who witnessed his fault. For our Lord showed Himself to Thomas only before those whom he had scandalized and grieved by his unbelief.

APPLICATION.—Have we always followed these rules of justice and charity? Have we not, to give a mark of confidence, manifested the faults of others—not to those whose duty it was to correct them, but to those who had nothing to do with them? Ask yourself if you have not reproaches, and very grave ones, perhaps, to make to yourself on this point.

COLLOQUY with our Divine Lord, in conformity with the **AFFECTIONS** and **RESOLUTIONS** of the foregoing Points.

THE APOSTLE THOMAS IS CONVERTED

AND CONFESSES THE FAITH

1st Prel. Imagine you see the Apostle humble and repentant at the feet of Jesus.

2d Prel. Ask the grace to share the same feelings, especially at the moment of receiving absolution.

POINT I

JESUS INVITES THOMAS TO TOUCH HIS WOUNDS

CONSIDERATION.—What must have been the fear and astonishment of Thomas when he beheld before him that Divine Master whom he had treated so badly! He had denied His veracity in refusing to believe in the resurrection which He had so often foretold and desired His Apostles to believe; he had been dictating conditions simply from his own judgment and whim, by saying, “Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.” After such pride and presumption, he might well fear a most just indignation. And nevertheless, what did Jesus say and do? He graciously condescended to what Thomas had demanded, with nothing more than a gentle reproach. “He saith to Thomas, Put in thy finger hither, and see My hands; and bring hither thy hand, and put it into My side; and be not faithless, but believing.” (St. John 20: 27.)

APPLICATION.—And in this same way, that He may gain a soul, the Good Shepherd actually condescends to yield, as we may say, to our inclinations, our weaknesses, our whims. How infinite is His goodness and gentleness! Have you not experienced it? Look at-

tentively over the past, especially over the circumstances of your vocation and your entrance into religion, and you will find proofs of that same goodness and gentleness which made allowance for your character, your temperament, your desires, or your inclinations.

AFFECTIONS.—Admiration, Love, Gratitude.

RESOLUTIONS.—To place ourselves with boundless confidence in the hands of the Good Shepherd of our souls.

POINT II

JESUS ACCEPTS REPENTANCE AND PROFESSION OF FAITH FROM THOMAS

CONSIDERATION.—The brightness and glory of the Divinity shining in the glorified body of Jesus, the sweet words that fell from His lips, and above all His wonderful gentleness, in one instant converted and gained the heart of the Apostle. Forgetting all else, he could only utter these words: “My Lord and my God! my Lord and my God!” (St. John 20:28.) The words were few, but they expressed a great deal; they contained the strongest profession of faith in the *humanity and divinity* of Jesus; they were a powerful expression of the feelings of veneration, repentance, submission, hope, love, and devotion, which were burning in the heart of St. Thomas. They were very pleasing to our Lord, and the sin of the penitent Apostle was forgotten and forgiven.

APPLICATION.—This may teach us that the worth of our prayers does not consist in the number and choice of the words we use, but in the disposition of heart from which they spring. We learn also how ready our Lord is to hear and to pardon us; to give us back His grace, even after we have grievously offended Him. It is our want of faith and confidence that hin-

ders us from being purified from the stains of our sins, and causes us to remain so poor in grace and merit.

AFFECTIONS.— To repeat, and enter into the spirit of these words of St. Thomas: “My Lord and my God!”

RESOLUTIONS.— On committing a fault, and in any difficulty, I will have recourse with confidence to the Divine Shepherd.

POINT III

JESUS DECLARES THE GREAT MERIT OF FAITH

CONSIDERATION.— Let us remark how our Divine Lord answered the Apostle’s declaration of faith: “Because thou hast seen Me, Thomas, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed.” (St. John 20: 29.) What is the meaning of those words? Clearly that the merit of faith and its reward in heaven will depend not on miraculous evidence, but in blindly submitting our understanding to the revealed word of God.

APPLICATION.— This lively faith which our Lord commended is an especial grace and gift from God. We must therefore beg for it from the Author of all grace; and we must beg for its continual increase, after the example of the apostles, when they said, “Lord, increase our faith.” Why is our faith so weak, so unfruitful in deeds of zeal and sanctity? Because we do not ask earnestly enough to have it strengthened and increased within us.

COLLOQUY with our Lord. Praise, bless, and glorify the mercy and meekness of our good and loving Saviour. Ask of Him, with the Apostles, the gift of that lively faith which is able to remove mountains.

APPEARANCE OF JESUS

ON THE BORDERS OF THE SEA OF TIBERIAS

1st Prel. Imagine you see the bark from which Peter and his six companions are throwing their nets in vain during the whole night.

2d Prel. Beg for grace never to labor without gathering fruit for eternity.

POINT I

PETER AND THE OTHER DISCIPLES PASS THE
NIGHT IN FISHING

CONSIDERATION.—This memorable appearance is thus recorded by St. John: "There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas who is called Didymus, and Nathanael, who was of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples. Simon Peter saith to them, I go a-fishing. They say to him, We also come with thee. And they went forth, and entered into the ship." (St. John 21:2, 3.) How united the Apostles were in feelings and wishes! Peter said he was going to fish, and all the others were ready to join him.

APPLICATION.—There is nothing more beautiful and more likely to preserve charity in community life than to know how to give up our own ideas and inclinations to follow those of others, when they are not contrary to the law of God or the rule. Have I done this? Is there not rather in me an inclination to contradict others? Am I not too attached to my own opinion? And have I not in consequence differed from others, and even had useless and dangerous disputes in words?

AFFECTIONS.—Excite in your heart an ardent desire to be able to say henceforth, with truth, in the words of the Apostle: "I became all things to all

men, that I might save all," (I. Cor. 9: 22;) forgetting myself on all occasions to seek only the interest of Christ and of my brethren.

RESOLUTIONS.—To endeavor to attain this end—to pay particular attention to it during the day.

POINT II

THEY LABOR ALL THE NIGHT AND TAKE NOTHING

CONSIDERATION.—“Et illa nocte nihil prendiderunt.” “And that night they caught nothing.” (St. John 21: 3.) This long and fruitless labor was arranged by Providence. It was the will of God that when our Lord was away from them, they should catch nothing during the whole night; and when He was with them, they should take a quantity of fish with one throw of their net; and this was to teach us that our labors will have no result for eternal life if our Lord is not present in our souls by sanctifying grace, and we are not closely united to Him by purity of intention and by a spirit of prayer.

APPLICATION.—There are no men and no religious more to be pitied than those who labor much and gain nothing, or very little, for eternity. Who are these unfortunate beings? First, those who are knowingly in the state of mortal sin, deprived of sanctifying grace; and this number is a very large one. Secondly, those who, being in a state of grace, lose altogether or in part the merit of their good works, because they have a bad intention in doing them, or because *they have no good intention*.

AFFECTIONS.—Thank God, who has called you to a state of life in which you find so many facilities for keeping yourself in the state of grace, and in close union with Him. Ask the grace to value your happiness ever more and more, to increase constantly in charity, and to acquire great merit by purity of intention in all your actions.

RESOLUTIONS.—Frequently to renew your good intentions by an ejaculatory prayer.

POINT III

THEY PERCEIVE JESUS ON THE SHORE, AND DO NOT RECOGNIZE HIM

CONSIDERATION.—“When the morning was come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus therefore said to them, Children, have you any meat? They answered Him, No.” (St. John 21 : 4, 5.) Our Divine Lord knew very well that they had taken nothing, that they were pressed by hunger and exhausted by fatigue. He had determined to supply their wants by a miracle, but He chose to question them, to make them tell out their trouble with their own lips, and kindle in their hearts an earnest desire for assistance.

APPLICATION.—Our knowledge of the misery of our soul, the humble confession of it, and our ardent desire for help, prepare us to receive the gifts of God. Is it not because you have been wanting in these dispositions that you have had such a small share in the favors of our Lord? Examine yourself, and be assured that the more your weakness makes you despair of yourself, the more right you have to pray with confidence, and the more assurance you have of help.

COLLOQUY with your Guardian Angel, who by his holy inspirations has assisted to preserve you from serious sin, or to raise you when you have fallen; who has constantly recalled to your mind the thought of God, and the obligation to devote your life and actions to His service.

MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES

JESUS RECOGNIZED BY ST. JOHN

1st Prel. Imagine you see the Apostles in the ship, and Jesus near them on the shore.

2d Prel. Beg for the spirit of obedience and fervor.

POINT I

REWARD OF THE BLIND OBEDIENCE OF THE APOSTLES

CONSIDERATION.—By the knowledge and humble confession of their helplessness, Jesus had prepared His disciples to receive an extraordinary favor. He then said to them, with that tone of authority which was habitual to Him — as St. Matthew tells us, “*Erat enim docens eos sicut potestatem habens.*” “He was teaching them as one having power.” (St. Matt. 7: 29.) “Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and you shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.” (St. John 21: 6.) This unexpected success against all probabilities was the reward of the prompt and blind obedience of the Apostles to the voice of Him who seemed to speak to them in the name of God, for “their eyes were held,” (St. Luke 24: 16,) so that they did not recognize their Divine Master.

APPLICATION.—If we wish to see all our undertakings crowned with perfect success, let us be the children of obedience, submissive in faith and in love to those who direct or command us in the name and with the authority of God. Let us imitate the Apostles, and like them, abstain from all replies and objections. Let us obey promptly and blindly, trusting to the word of Him whose Hand is omnipotent, and who has told us, “An obedient man shall speak of victories.” (Prov.

22: 28.) Do we habitually obey in this manner, doing what the rule, the duties of our office, and our superiors require from us?

AFFECTIONS.— Beg earnestly the grace to excel in the virtue of obedience.

RESOLUTIONS.— To avoid questioning the reasons of the directions we may receive.

POINT II

REWARD OF THE VIRGINITY OF ST. JOHN

CONSIDERATION.— The miraculous draught would, we should have thought, at once have revealed to the disciples to whom they owed it. Nevertheless, John, the beloved disciple, was the only one who pierced the veil which surrounded Jesus, and he said to Peter, “*Dominus est.*” “It is the Lord.” (St. John 21: 7.) Why had St. John this supernatural light in preference to the other disciples? St. Jerome tells us it was the prerogative of his virginity: “*Solus virgo virginem agnoscit.*” “It was the virgin disciple only, who recognized the King of virgins.” The purity of his heart had won for him a special place of preference in the heart of Jesus; and in this we see the literal fulfillment of our Saviour’s words, “*Beati mundo corde; quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt.*” “Blessed are the clean of heart; for they shall see God.” (St. Matt. 5: 8.)

APPLICATION.— We often complain of being habitually in a state of spiritual darkness and dryness, of having so little of that light which at once enlightens the soul, fills it with a sweet unction, and wonderfully confirms it in the love of God. Where shall we look for the cause of this? May it not be, perhaps, because we have taken little care to preserve and increase our purity of heart? Are you not among those whose want of mortification and recollection leads them into

many faults? Even if these faults are light ones, they leave stains in our soul and keep light back from it.

AFFECTIONS.—“Cor mundum crea in me, Deus!” “Create a clean heart in me, O God!” “Amplius lava me ab iniquitate mea.” “Wash me yet more from my iniquity.” (Psalm 50: 12, 4.)

RESOLUTIONS.—To endeavor by every means to attain great purity of conscience.

POINT III

ST. PETER'S BURST OF FERVOR

CONSIDERATION.—“Simon Peter, when he heard it was the Lord, cast himself into the sea.” (St. John 21: 7.) St. Peter's transport of love for his Divine Master was so great that he could not wait for the progress of the ship. He was impatient to be with Him whom he loved, and love does not wait to reason. He never thought of the dangers he might run by throwing himself into the sea. To go to Jesus, to be with Him as soon as possible, was his sole thought, and he saw no difficulties in the way.

APPLICATION.—In this conduct of the Apostle we find all the marks of real fervor and of divine love so well described by the author of the *Imitation*: “Love oftentimes knoweth no measure, but is fervent beyond all measure, attempts what is above its strength, pleads no excuse of impossibility; it is, therefore, able to undertake all things, while he who does not love would faint and lie down.” (III. Book, 5.) Do you sometimes experience the effects of love like this?

COLLOQUY with our Lord. Ask of Him a pure and humble heart—a heart subject to Him, and burning with His love.

ON THE GOSPEL OF THE DAY

1st Prel. Imagine you see Jesus Christ speaking to the Apostles of the mission of the Holy Ghost.

2d Prel. Beg for a spirit of disinterested love.

POINT I

DISINTERESTED LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST IN SENDING
THE HOLY GHOST

CONSIDERATION.—“ And now I go to Him that sent Me, and none of you asketh Me, Whither goest Thou? But because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow hath filled your heart. But I tell you the truth; it is expedient to you that I go.” (St. John 16: 5-7.) Such was the disinterested love of Jesus Christ for us. It was not the rest, the bliss, and the glory promised to His sacred humanity, that He thought of in His ascension, but our interest, our advantage. To the very last moment of His sensible presence on earth He forgot Himself, and thought only of us. It was thus during the whole course of His life, from the stable where He wept — not from sorrow, but from compassion — until Calvary, when He said to the women who pitied Him, “ Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over Me, but weep for yourselves and your children.” (St. Luke 23: 28.)

APPLICATION.— Compare your love for God with that disinterested love that He has shown you, and see what you ought to think of it. You will probably find that your love is not worthy of the name, so much is self-love mixed up in it. And in the generous efforts that you sometimes make to avoid sin or to practice virtue, is it not principally, if not entirely, the fear of punishment, or the hope of reward, which influences you?

AFFECTIONS.— Humble acknowledgment of our

faults and unworthiness. Desire to attain a higher degree of love, more worthy of God, and more worthy also of yourself as the child of God.

RESOLUTIONS.—To endeavor to love God for His own sake.

POINT II

PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

CONSIDERATION.—“If I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.” (St. John 16:7.) Why could not the Apostles receive the Holy Ghost before the Ascension of Jesus Christ? One reason which the interpreters of Holy Scripture give, and which St. Austin especially insists upon is, that the attachment of the Apostles to the corporal presence of their Master was too human and sensible, and the love they bore Him was too natural, too imperfect. It was necessary that the sensible object of their love, the *humanity* of the Word, should be taken from them; for if not, they could not receive the plenitude of the Holy Spirit, nor become really spiritual men.

APPLICATION.—If, in one sense, the presence even of Jesus Christ was an obstacle to the reception by the Apostles of the fullness of the Holy Ghost, what should you think of the affection that you have for many objects, the deprivation of which touches you so keenly, and affects you so deeply, and especially of those overgreat attachments or particular friendships that you indulge in? These affections and friendships are often irregular, foolish, and always hurtful, because they generally rest only on sympathy or sensible attraction; they degenerate frequently into familiarity or misplaced confidence: they are a loss of time, and they disturb that sweet and entire peace of conscience which those only enjoy whose thoughts and affections are given to God alone. Besides, knowing what a leaning

we always have toward evil, it is to be feared that these natural affections may become sensual or even sinful. What does experience tell you about this? What ought you to do?

AFFECTIONS.— Lay down on the altar of the love of God all those affections which do not either originate in Him or tend to Him as their end.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will often examine myself with regard to earthly affections and attachments.

POINT III

OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

CONSIDERATION.—“ And when He is come, He will convince the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment; He will teach you all truth.” (St. John 16: 8, 13.) When the Spirit of God really possesses a soul, it always produces two effects: 1st, a spirit of sanctity, reproaching us with the slightest sin, correcting and rectifying our defective judgments, and showing us the great insufficiency of our imaginary goodness; 2d, a spirit of light, instructing us about our duties, helping us to understand and relish eternal truths, ever showing us new means and new practices of advancing in perfection.

APPLICATION.— Do you perceive and feel these wonderful operations of the Holy Spirit? Are you docile to them? are you attentive to the movements they produce in your heart? If you can not answer yes, ought you not to conclude that you are not an interior man, or that you are very insensible, if not indocile, to the attractions of grace? And ought you not further to fear lest you deserve the reproof St. Stephen gave to the Jews, “ Stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Ghost?” (Acts 7: 51.)

COLLOQUY with the Holy Ghost.

JESUS WORKS ANOTHER MIRACLE

IN FAVOR OF THE SEVEN DISCIPLES

1st Prel. Imagine you see the seven disciples witnesses of the miracle, with Jesus in their midst.

2d Prel. Beg for grace to know Jesus better and to love Him more ardently.

POINT I

JESUS PROVIDES THE REPAST OF THE DISCIPLES BY
MIRACLE

CONSIDERATION.—“As soon, then, as they came to land, they saw hot coals lying, and a fish laid thereon, and bread.” (St. John 21: 9.) They were exhausted by fatigue, faint with hunger: but they had neither fire nor food, and it would have taken a long time to have procured either. Jesus provided them by another miracle, so that in an instant they had all they needed. But that they should have the pleasure of eating the fish they had caught, and of tasting something of their own, He said, “Bring hither of the fishes which you have now caught.” (St. John 21: 10.) And He invited them to the repast, saying, “Come and dine.” What a refinement of love and goodness did our Lord thus show to His poor servants!

APPLICATION.—And thus does He daily act toward us: it is by a continual miracle of His power and goodness that the earth brings forth food for our nourishment; we owe it all to Him; yet, by requiring us to do our part, He lets us have the satisfaction of thinking we are tasting the fruit of our own labors. Again, it is He, and He only, who by the help of His grace gives supernatural merit to our good works; and yet He grants us a reward in proportion to our efforts, as if all the merit were our own, and as if He would let us have the satisfaction of thinking we have made our

own fortune, while in reality "it is His own gifts that He crowns in His elect," as St. Austin so beautifully says, "*Sua in nobis Deus dona coronat.*" Do you think often enough of this indulgent goodness of God toward you? Do you not often fail in giving Him the gratitude which is due to Him, and attribute to yourself too great a share in your good deeds?

AFFECTIONS.— Acknowledge yourself, in the words of the Apostle, indebted for all things to the gift of Divine grace. "By the grace of God I am what I am." "*Gratia Dei, sum id quod sum.*" (1. Cor. 15: 10.)

RESOLUTIONS.— Accustom yourself to recognize, on every occasion, the effects of the mercy and goodness of God.

POINT II

JESUS MAKES HIMSELF GRADUALLY KNOWN TO THE DISCIPLES

CONSIDERATION.— One remarkable circumstance of this appearance to the seven disciples was, as the gospel tells us, that "none of them who were at meat durst ask Him, Who art Thou? knowing that it was the Lord." (St. John 21: 12.) We must, therefore, conclude that our Lord appeared to them under some form which veiled Him from their sight; they could not *see* that it was He, and yet they *knew* it, as the Evangelist says — meaning that they *believed* it without doubting. What gave them this faith? The exterior testimony of a miracle and the interior voice of grace.

APPLICATION.— Is not this our case when we are in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, or approach the holy altar? We do not then *see* Jesus Christ: He is veiled from our eyes under the appearance of bread; but we *know* that it is He: we believe it without doubting, being assured of it by the testimony of faith, and

by the unction of grace from that Divine Lord, who speaks and acts within us. We ought, then, to try and equal the respect and love which the disciples gave to His adorable Person. Do you do this habitually?

AFFECTIONS.—Make a lively act of faith in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, and express an ardent desire to love Him henceforth as He deserves to be loved.

RESOLUTIONS.—Examine frequently if your conduct corresponds with these protestations of faith and love.

POINT III

JESUS SITS DOWN TO TABLE WITH HIS DISCIPLES, AND SERVES THEM

CONSIDERATION.—Our Lord, not yet weary of showing His love and care to His dear disciples, “cometh,” continues the Evangelist, “and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish in like manner.” (St. John 21: 13.)

APPLICATION.—Here is at once the image and the pledge of what our loving Lord will, one day, do in our heavenly home for His faithful servants; to those especially who, after the example of the Apostles, have abandoned all for Him. He deigns to tell us this Himself. “I am in the midst of you as he that serveth — they who have continued with Me in my temptations; and I dispose to you, as my Father hath disposed to Me, a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and may sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (St. Luke 22: 27–30.) Let us expand our hearts at the thought of these encouraging and glorious promises.

COLLOQUY with our Beloved Saviour. Let us thank Him, and consecrate ourselves anew to His service with increased fervor and generosity.

JESUS SEARCHES THE HEART OF ST. PETER,

AND APPOINTS HIM HEAD OF THE CHURCH

1st Prel. Imagine you hear our Lord saying to Peter, "Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these?" (St. John 21: 15.)

2d Prel. Beg for the grace of ardent love.

POINT I

VOCATION OF ST. PETER TO BE SOVEREIGN PONTIFF

CONSIDERATION.—The miraculous draught should have reminded the disciples of our Lord's promise, "I will make you to be fishers of men." (St. Matt. 4: 19.) Simon Peter had a larger share in it than the others, by the ordering of Providence, because he was to take the greatest part in fishing for souls; he was to be placed at the head of the Apostles in the position of Sovereign Pontiff. To hold this great dignity worthily, he required great sanctity, or love, which is the perfection of sanctity. This was the reason that "when therefore they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these? He saith to Him, Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him, Feed My lambs." (St. John 21: 15.)

APPLICATION.—We also, by the grace of a religious vocation, are raised above seculars, and called to take a greater part in the search for souls. But this vocation obliges us, both before God and men, to tend to a higher degree of charity or sanctity. To us also, to each of us, our Lord puts this question, "Lovest Thou Me more than these?" What answer can we give Him from the depths of our hearts?

AFFECTIONS.— Desire earnestly to excel in charity, that you may always be able to say with truth, “Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee,” and that I wish to love Thee constantly more and more.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will often repeat the pious aspiration, *Heart of Jesus, grant that I may love Thee daily more and more!*

POINT II

THREEFOLD PROTESTATION OF LOVE FROM ST. PETER

CONSIDERATION.— “He saith to him again, Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me? He saith to Him, Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him, Feed My lambs. He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me? And he said to Him, Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee. He said to him, Feed My sheep.” (St. John 21: 16, 17.) By these last words, “Feed my sheep,” not only the lambs, but the sheep, Jesus Christ placed both the faithful and their pastors under the charge of St. Peter and his lawful successors. He made him the only visible head of His Church, that He might thus insure its perfect unity until the end of time.

APPLICATION.— With what great modesty St. Peter speaks! No longer, as on the night of the Last Supper, does he say he is certain about his love; but now he appeals to his Master, who knows the depths of the heart. His past faults and weaknesses have made him humble and diffident of himself, but not distrustful of the goodness of his Lord. Imitate him in this, and you, like him, will draw good out of evil. Remark also with what eagerness and what happiness St. Peter seized the occasion thus offered to him of repairing the scandal of his threefold denial by a threefold and fervent declaration of love. If you have compromised the respect due to your holy state by any pub-

lic fault, seize upon the first occasion of making reparation for it.

AFFECTIONS.— I will beg of our Lord to assist me with His powerful grace, that I may love Him as He should be loved.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will ask myself frequently, Am I what I should be in the sight of God and men?

POINT III

GRIEF OF THE APOSTLE ST. PETER

CONSIDERATION.—“ Peter was grieved because He had said to him the third time, Lovest thou me?” (St. John 21: 17.) The poor fisherman of Galilee was about to be promoted to the highest dignity, and crowned with honors by the Son of God Himself. Such a distinction should naturally have filled him with joy and happiness. But however, the Evangelist tells us, he was sad and grieved. Why was he in such trouble? Because he was afraid of not *really* having the love for his Divine Master which he *believed* he had, or of failing a second time in the manifestation of it. Our Lord's three questions awoke this fear in his heart, and he could think of nothing else.

APPLICATION.— Happy is the religious in whom the love of God and the desire of increasing in it reigns supreme, and who has no other cause for fear or trouble than that of decreasing in fervor or generosity in the service of the Lord his God!

COLLOQUY with St. Peter. Congratulate him. Beg of him to obtain for us some share in the great love for God with which he was inspired by our Lord.

JESUS

FORETELLS THE MARTYRDOM OF THE CROSS TO ST.
PETER, AND REPROVES HIS CURIOSITY

1st Prel. Imagine you see Jesus Christ saying to St. Peter,
"Follow Me." (St. John 21: 19.)

2d Prel. Beg for grace to follow Jesus faithfully in little things,
so that you may also follow Him in great things.

POINT I

JESUS FORETELLS THE MARTYRDOM OF THE CROSS TO
ST. PETER

CONSIDERATION.—Peter, while he declared aloud his love for Jesus, was not without fear. Was he, he asked himself, sure of his perseverance if he met with some great temptation like that before which he had fallen? The doubt was agony to him; and Jesus graciously comforted him by the assurance that he would be generous and faithful. "Amen, amen, I say to thee, when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall lead thee whither thou wouldst not;" and "this He said," remarks the Evangelist, "signifying by what death he should glorify God," (St. John 21: 18, 19;) by the death of the cross—death endured for justice' sake—martyrdom. This was the reward given to the Apostle's love, and by this he was to glorify the great rank and dignity to which he had been raised.

APPLICATION.—We should fear rather, then, such offices of superiority in religion—for they ought to be to those who are placed in them only a laborious and painful burden. We should look on them only as a long and severe martyrdom, which a true religious should submit to, but never seek after. We should see also in the crosses that God sends us only the proofs of

His love, and the means of making Him some return for it. Have we looked upon them in this light?

AFFECTIONS.— Acts of love for Jesus Christ; fear and distrust of yourself. Beg of God that you may be enabled to prove yourself strong and generous of heart in time of trial.

RESOLUTIONS.— To rejoice, in the spirit of faith, under crosses and humiliations.

POINT II

JESUS BIDS PETER FOLLOW IN HIS FOOTSTEPS

CONSIDERATION.— Jesus, after having assured St. Peter that he should be faithful unto death, walked forward, and said to him, "Follow me." What did our Lord mean by giving the Apostle, who was ready for martyrdom, a command so easy to obey? To show him that to be faithful in great things, we must be habitually faithful in little ones; and that to be able to make painful and heroic sacrifices when required, we must have a habit of making slight and easy ones. This was, in fact, what He had taught before His Passion, when He said, "*Qui fidelis est in minimo, et in majore fidelis est.*" "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in that which is greater." (St. Luke 16: 10.)

APPLICATION.— Everyday experience confirms the truth of this doctrine; we never see those who are habitually faithful to their rule fall into great errors; we always remark, on the contrary, that in times of great trial they remain faithful even to martyrdom. And this grace of martyrdom, which no one can merit, was the reward of their fidelity in little things, and of the constant mortification which it implies. Before they were martyrs for the faith, they were martyrs to their rule, even to its smallest details. Is not this the

meaning of that beautiful Antiphon of the Office for Martyrs, "*Omnes sancti quanta passi sunt tormenta, ut securi pervenirent ad palmam martyrii.*" "Behold the saints, how great torments they have all suffered, that they might securely attain the palm of martyrdom?"

AFFECTIONS.— Strive to gain courage to walk generously in the footsteps of those religious who adhere most closely to their rule. Ask of God the grace to do so.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will endeavor specially, during this day, to conquer myself in everything.

POINT III

JESUS REPROVES PETER FOR HIS CURIOSITY

CONSIDERATION.—"Peter turning about, saw that disciple whom Jesus loved following;" and he said, "Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith to him, So I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? follow thou Me." (St. John 21:20-22.)

APPLICATION.— It is an ordinary temptation in community life to busy ourselves or mix ourselves up in the affairs of others — to judge or interpret in a wrong sense the words and actions of others. If this temptation comes to you, say to yourself, what our Lord said to St. Peter, What is it to thee? thou art not the superior charged to watch over the others; thou wilt not be asked to give account for others, but only for thyself. This is the best means of conquering this temptation. Have you made use of it? how often? and with what success?

COLLOQUY with the holy Apostle St. Peter.

THE APPARITION

OF OUR LORD TO THE FIVE HUNDRED DISCIPLES

1st Prel. Represent to yourselves Jesus standing in the midst of the five hundred disciples, who are transported with joy at the sight of their Master.

2d Prel. Ask of Him to give you often the joy and refreshment of His sensible presence.

POINT I

EAGERNESS OF THE DISCIPLES TO SEE JESUS

CONSIDERATION.— A few days before the Ascension, writes St. Matthew, “the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them,” (St. Matt. 28: 16,) where “He was seen,” adds St. Paul, “by more than five hundred brethren at once.” (1. Cor. 15: 6.) This apparition is the only one of which the time and place were known beforehand. Not only Jesus Himself, but the Angel, had announced it long before; which accounts for the number of witnesses being so much greater than on any preceding occasion — “more than five hundred.” Imagine with what intense eagerness the greater part of these, who had not seen the Lord since His resurrection, must have hastened to the appointed place, urged on by the natural desire to see a dead man raised to life; and still more by the more perfect motive of longing to show their reverence, love, and gratitude to their risen Lord; and also, we may well believe, inspired with the hope of receiving not only His blessing, but special graces and favors.

APPLICATION.— If it were now to be revealed that Jesus would appear visibly in some appointed place, how eagerly men would repair thither, even at the cost of a long and troublesome journey! The mere thought of coming into the presence of their God and

Saviour, the Giver of all good gifts, with the expectation of receiving some special favor, would make the most toilsome journey seem light and easy: and yet — O marvelous thought! — this very God and Saviour is in the midst of these same men, in a multitude of temples: and what do we see? Instead of hastening to Him, they will not go near Him. This is, indeed, a most mysterious inconsistency. You are shocked, grieved, but are you in no degree guilty yourself? How often do you visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament? What are your thoughts when you kneel before Him?

AFFECTIONS.— Let us humble ourselves in considering how slow we are to visit our Lord Jesus Christ, and how tepid in His presence. Let us ask pardon for this tepidity.

RESOLUTIONS.— Endeavor to reanimate your devotion to the most Holy Sacrament.

POINT II

WEAK FAITH OF SOME OF THE DISCIPLES

CONSIDERATION.—“ And seeing Him, they adored,” says St. Matthew. “ Quidam autem dubitaverunt.” “ But,” he adds, “ some doubted ” (St. Matt. 28: 17) the reality of His resurrection, and because their faith was weak, their love was cold. Their distrust and uncertainty contrasted sadly with the lively faith and eager joy of the rest; they were dull and cold amidst the holy zeal and fervor of their brethren. This must have been a source of great grief to the other disciples, and doubtless also to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

APPLICATION.— Is not this a picture of what we see at the present day in even the most exemplary communities? Do we not too often see, amongst a number of religious who are full of faith and fervor, because they have been faithful to the grace of their holy vocation, others who *seem to doubt*, or to have lost con-

sciousness of the solemn obligations imposed upon them by their vows, who, constantly hovering between good and evil, have fallen into a state of relaxation and tepidity, and have become, through their irregularities, a source of grief to their brethren and of painful anxiety to their superiors?

AFFECTIONS.— Beg of God that He would preserve you always from the misfortune of resembling these degenerate Christians.

RESOLUTIONS.— Dread the least infidelity, lest you may fall into serious recklessness and disorder.

POINT III

THE REPROACH OF JESUS TO THE DISCIPLES

CONSIDERATION.— Jesus said to His disciples, “O foolish, and slow of heart to believe in all the things which the prophets have spoken!” (St. Luke 24: 25.) This reproach did not proceed from impatience or ill-humor, but from the love of Jesus for His disciples, even while they remained in error and unbelief. They attributed their Master’s death to weakness, and could no longer believe in His omnipotence. For this reason Jesus added to His reproof the explanation necessary to convince them of their error. He said, “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things that were concerning Him.” (St. Luke 24: 26, 27.)

APPLICATION.— Learn first, from this example, never to reproach any one out of resentment or spite, but only from duty and charity; and further, always endeavor to instruct those whom you are obliged to reprove, in order that they may acknowledge and amend their errors. Have you followed this rule of conduct!

COLLOQUY with your Guardian Angel.

JESUS SENDS HIS APOSTLES

TO PREACH AND BAPTIZE THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE
WORLD

- 1st Prel.* Represent to yourselves Jesus Christ saying to His disciples, "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations." (St. Matt. 28: 18, 19.)
- 2d Prel.* Ask the grace of perfect fidelity to your vocation.

POINT I

ALL POWER IS GIVEN TO JESUS

CONSIDERATION.—Jesus said to His disciples, "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth." What an exalted idea do these few words give us of our Blessed Lord in His human nature! "All power is given to Me in heaven." He reigns there over all the countless legions of angels in heaven; He bestows offices and kingdoms there on whomsoever He will: "I dispose to you," He said to His Apostles, "as My Father hath disposed to Me, a kingdom." He causes the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the treasures of sanctifying grace, to descend from thence upon His friends, treasures which are able to raise them in one moment to the greatest heights of perfection. "And all power is given to me in earth." He is therefore the arbiter of life and death. Nothing can resist Him; neither the world nor the devil, nor all the powers of hell combined, can hurt a hair of the head of those whom He protects.

APPLICATION.—Let us praise Jesus for the power and the glory which He has won by His sufferings and humiliations; and let us rejoice that we have obeyed His invitation, and have renounced the world and left all things to consecrate ourselves entirely, irrevocably, to the service of so powerful and generous a King, who

has promised us, (they are His own words,) "Every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My Name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall possess life everlasting." (St. Matt. 19: 29.)

AFFECTIONS.— Let us excite in our hearts lively sentiments of love, confidence, and generosity. Let us renew our baptismal and religious vows.

RESOLUTIONS.— In temptations to discouragement and distrust, I will say with the Apostle, "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me." (Philip. 4: 13.)

POINT II

THE APOSTLES ARE COMMISSIONED TO EVANGELIZE THE WORLD

CONSIDERATION.— The words on which we have just been meditating, namely, "All power is given to me," had prepared the Apostles to receive the mission which Jesus was about to confide to them — the mission to preach the Gospel in all the world, to bring all men into the one Fold of the Church, and to lay the foundation of that kingdom of which He had so often spoken, both before and after His resurrection; He gave it therefore in these words: "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature." (St. Mark 16: 15.)

APPLICATION.— Observe that Jesus did not execute the great work of the conversion of the world Himself, but intrusted it to His Apostles — men who were in themselves wholly unfit for such an undertaking. Learn from this, if you are elected to any office or superiority, not to depend wholly upon yourself, as though no one else were capable of discharging its duties; and also, never to refuse any office that obedience may impose upon you under the excuse that you

are unfit for it. Trust in the help of Almighty God, who takes pleasure in doing great things through weak instruments.

AFFECTIONS.—Praise and admire the infinite goodness of Christ, who thinks only of serving that world which despised and rejected Him. Bless Him and thank Him for having placed you in the bosom of His Church, and for having called you to a religious order which assists in so many ways in effecting the salvation of souls.

RESOLUTIONS.—To believe that we are capable of all things with the help of Divine grace.

POINT III

THE COMMAND TO BAPTIZE IN THE NAME OF THE BLESSED TRINITY IS JOINED TO THE MISSION OF PREACHING

CONSIDERATION.—After saying, “Teach ye all nations,” Jesus immediately added, “baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” (St. Matt. 28: 19.) The conditions, therefore, of admission into His Church are a profession of faith in the Holy Trinity, and baptism in the name of the Three Divine Persons. It is also our chief defense against the assaults of the devil, and our best safeguard against all dangers, to invoke the Most Holy Trinity, making at the same time the sign of the cross, the instrument of our redemption, whereby also we make a public confession of our faith, and an acknowledgment of the benefits we have received from the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

APPLICATION.—Always make the sign of the cross with great attention and devotion, in order to reap all possible benefit from it.

COLLOQUY with the Three Persons of the Adorable Trinity.

CONTINUATION OF THE PRECEDING SUBJECT:

ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

1st Prel. Represent to yourself the Apostles surrounding Jesus, and listening to Him.

2d Prel. Ask for a truly apostolic spirit of faith and zeal.

POINT I

THE DEPOSIT OF THE FAITH IS CONFIDED TO THE APOSTLES

CONSIDERATION.— It was through the bond of faith, by a belief in the same doctrines, the same Sacraments, the same precepts of morality, that the faithful throughout the world were to be united in one Body, forming the Church of Jesus Christ, the heritage of God. Our Blessed Lord, therefore, before His Ascension, provided for the unity and indefectibility of the faith which He had preached to mankind and left to His Apostles. And this He did, first, by commanding them to teach men to believe and practice all that He had taught, without either adding to it or taking from it. “*Docentes eos servare omnia quaecumque mandavi vobis.*” “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” (St. Matt. 28: 20.) Secondly, by sending the Holy Ghost upon them, the Spirit of Truth: “And I send the promise of My Father upon you,” (St. Luke 24: 49,) “the Spirit of Truth.” (St. John 15: 26.) Thirdly, by assuring them that the successors of St. Peter should always retain the gift of infallibility in faith and morals; saying to that great Apostle, “*Ego autem rogavi pro te, ut non deficiat fides tua.*” “I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.” (St. Luke 22: 32.)

APPLICATION.— More than eighteen hundred years have elapsed since Jesus Christ founded His Church, and yet we see it remaining unchanged to the present day. The Church alone has stood firm, unaltered, unshaken, amidst all the changes and revolutions of the world. The deposit of the faith confided to the Apos-

ties has been preserved intact. Examination of the traditions of the Church will convince us that we believe now all the same doctrines which were first announced by Jesus Christ and His Apostles, and that consequently we are in the true Church *militant* on earth, from whence we may hope to pass into the Church *triumphant* in heaven.

AFFECTIONS.—Admiration, gladness of heart, gratitude, an ardent desire to propagate the faith and be of service to the Church.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will derive courage from these words of the Apostle: “*Certa bonum certamen fidei; apprehende vitam æternam, in qua vocatus es.*” “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art called.” (1. Tim. 6: 12.)

POINT II

SALVATION IS PROMISED TO TRUE BELIEVERS

CONSIDERATION.—“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned.” (St. Luke 16: 16.) If we attentively consider these words of our Divine Lord, we shall find in them a powerful motive both of joy and fear; of *joy*, because they point out a secure and easy way to eternal salvation; of *fear*, because they declare the condemnation, not only of obstinate heretics, but also, in different degrees, of two kinds of Catholics, only too numerous, alas! at the present time. They contain an *explicit* condemnation of those who venture to speak lightly of certain doctrines, and thus seem to approve of the detestable principle that *it matters little what a man believes, provided he leads a good life*; and an *implicit* condemnation of those who, while they profess to adhere strictly to every article of faith, lead lives little in accordance with their belief. Now, St. James declares that “Faith without works is dead,” (2: 20;) and our Blessed Lord says that God will “render to every man according to his works.” (St. Matt. 16: 27.)

APPLICATION.—Are we not ourselves, to a certain extent, among the number of these last? Examine seriously what is your belief concerning the malice and the pernicious effects of venial sin; concerning the obligations of your vows, the duties of your office, the reverence due to God, especially in time of prayer, the importance of beginning each day well, etc. Then examine what is your conduct in all these respects; in other words, what is your *practical faith*.

AFFECTIONS.—Salutary confusion at the consideration of your inconsistencies. Accuse yourself of your faults before God, and ask pardon for them.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will endeavor henceforth that my conduct may be more in harmony with my faith.

POINT III

THE GIFT OF MIRACLES IS PROMISED TO THE EARLY CHRISTIANS

CONSIDERATION.—Jesus promised the gift of miracles to the Apostles, and their immediate followers, in confirmation of their preaching, and to strengthen the faith of their converts. “These signs,” He said, “shall follow them that believe: in My Name they shall cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues, they shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay their hands upon the sick, and they shall recover.” (St. Mark 16: 17, 18.) And we learn from history that all these promises were literally fulfilled.

APPLICATION.—Let us here admire the wisdom and goodness of God, who always proportions the means to the end; He works miracles to persuade the Gentiles to receive the true faith; but when it has once been accepted and established, He withdraws the gift, that He may leave us the full benefit of making acts of faith.

COLLOQUY with our Lord. Praise, blessing, and thanksgiving.

ON THE GOSPEL OF THE DAY:

MOTIVES OF CONFIDENCE IN PRAYER

1st Prel. Behold Jesus saying to His Disciples, "Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father any thing in My Name, He will give it you."

2d Prel. Ask for a continual increase of faith, and confidence in prayer.

POINT I

MOTIVES OF CONFIDENCE ON THE PART OF GOD

CONSIDERATION.— Want of confidence is one of the chief causes of the inefficacy of our prayers. And yet what powerful motives we have for confidence! Motives drawn from the thought of God, from the thought of ourselves, and from the thought of our neighbor, when we use intercessory prayer. On the part of God, let us remember that He is almighty, and consequently can grant all that we ask; He is omnipresent, and therefore can hear us everywhere, and knows even our most secret desires; He is our tender Father, and loves us more than we love ourselves. If we still have any doubts, they must surely be dispelled by those gracious words of our Divine Lord: "If you ask the Father anything in My Name, He will give it you." (St. John 16: 23.)

APPLICATION.— How is it that, whilst we acknowledge these truths, we pray ordinarily with so little confidence? We seem to cherish a kind of foreboding that our prayers will not be granted, or else to imagine some immense distance between God and ourselves, in which they will be lost before they reach Him. Or is it that we look on God only as a severe Judge, alienated from us by our past sins and present infidelities? Let

us examine ourselves carefully on these points; for often these motives of distrust are so hidden that they influence us without our being able to perceive it.

AFFECTIONS.—United in spirit with the Apostles, who said, “Lord, strengthen our faith,” ask of Jesus an increase of faith and confidence in His infinite goodness.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will always cast from me every thought of distrust.

POINT II

MOTIVES DRAWN FROM OURSELVES

CONSIDERATION.—Our own helplessness and spiritual misery ought to inspire us with the greatest confidence; for God requires of us that we should aim at perfection, and we ourselves desire it; but we find ourselves powerless to attain it without His help and the constant succor of grace. Our Lord Himself teaches us this when He says, “Without Me you can do nothing.” (St. John 15: 5.) But He also says, “Quodcumque volueritis, petetis, et fiet vobis.” “You shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you.” (St. John 15: 7.) If it were not so, God would require an impossibility of us, which it would be absurd to suppose.

APPLICATION.—We may draw a most consoling and encouraging conclusion from these considerations; namely, that the weaker we find ourselves, the more unable to rise from our sins, and conquer our bad habits, the more right we have to trust in the efficacy of our prayers. This is self-evident, and yet have we not often acted as though the contrary were true? Have we not fallen into despair or discouragement after our falls? And when tepidity or disgust for spiritual things has taken possession of us, have we not left off praying, or lost all confidence in our prayers, as though

God would not hear them? Let us acknowledge our errors, and be careful to avoid a repetition of them.

AFFECTIONS.—When oppressed with the weight of my miseries, I will but cry out the more to Thee, O Lord! with confidence and full assurance of being heard.

RESOLUTIONS.—Say, with King David, in moments of discouragement: “*Adhæsit pavimento anima mea: vivifica me.*” “My soul hath cleaved to the pavement: quicken Thou me.” (Psalm 118: 25.)

POINT III

MOTIVES DRAWN FROM OUR NEIGHBOR

CONSIDERATION.—We have three powerful motives for confidence when we pray for others, especially for sinners, or for any who have been recommended to our prayers: 1st, that we are performing an act most pleasing to Almighty God; 2d, that we are fulfilling a duty; 3d, that it is a disinterested act of charity. We can pray with more boldness for another than for ourselves, and with more confidence in proportion to his need.

APPLICATION.—When we look at the impiety and immorality which surround us, or on the apparent uselessness of our efforts to convert others, or save the souls confided to our care, are we not tempted to look upon them as incurable? Do we not feel inclined to leave off praying for them—to leave them to their fate? Far be such a thought from us; it is contrary to charity, and an insult to God.

COLLOQUY with the Saint whose feast we celebrate this day.

THE ROGATION-DAYS

1st Prel. Place yourself in spirit in the procession among the faithful.

2d Prel. Beg the grace to enter into the spirit of the Church.

POINT I

ORIGIN OF THE ROGATION-DAYS

CONSIDERATION.—The origin of the Rogation-Days, or the three days of prayer and abstinence immediately preceding the Feast of the Ascension, may be traced to Saint Mamertus, Bishop of Vienne in Dauphiné, in the fifth century. From the time that the Burgundians invaded this country, it had been visited every year with grievous calamities, which were looked upon as chastisements from God. The year 470 was a terribly fatal one to the city of Vienne; and the holy bishop then made a vow to establish *rogations*, or public prayers and processions, in his diocese every year. The people gladly co-operated with him, and he then appointed the ceremonies for the three days before the Ascension, prescribed the fast to be observed, and chose three churches outside of the walls of the town as the places to which the processions should be made. The prayers were answered, the scourge was removed, and the other French bishops adopted the same plan in their respective dioceses. Toward the end of the eighth century, Pope Leo III imposed the observance of the Rogation-Days as an obligation on the whole Latin Church; but, in consideration of the Paschal season, he changed the fast into an abstinence.

APPLICATION.—See with what wisdom Divine Providence makes use of what would seem adverse circumstances, to introduce new practices of devotion

and thus nourish the faith and fervor of the faithful.

AFFECTIONS.—Praise and bless the paternal Providence of God, so solicitous for our spiritual and temporal needs.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will endeavor, to-day, to enter into the spirit of the Church, and to attain the object which she desires.

POINT II

THE OBJECT OF THIS DEVOTION

CONSIDERATION.—In order to conform ourselves to the spirit of the Church during these three days, we ought to keep steadfastly before our minds the ends she had in view in appointing them. These ends are not only deliverance from some passing danger, but our preservation from all the numberless evils, both of soul and body, which threaten us; the attainment of all that is necessary for our spiritual and temporal welfare, and especially the blessing of God on the fruits of the earth at this particular season of the year when they begin to bud forth.

APPLICATION.—We, above all men, are bound to make generous efforts to obtain the ends proposed by the Church. As religious, we ought to be distinguished, above all others, by our zeal, and by the exercise of a more ardent charity. We ought to place ourselves as intercessors between an offended God and His guilty creatures, and turn away the judgments their sins provoke, by our prayers, penances, and acts of mortification. Do we fully realize this truth? Do our acts bear witness to our faith in this respect?

AFFECTIONS.—“*Ut nobis indulgeas. Ut inimicos Sanctæ Ecclesiæ humiliare digneris. Ut fructus terræ dare et conservare digneris. Te rogamus audi nos.*”
“That Thou wouldst pardon us, we beseech Thee hear

us. That Thou wouldst vouchsafe to humble the enemies of Thy Holy Church. That Thou wouldst vouchsafe to give and preserve the fruits of the earth. We beseech Thee hear us." (Litany.)

RESOLUTIONS.— I will consider myself, during these three days, as a victim of expiation immolated to the glory of God.

POINT III

MEANS TO OBTAIN THESE ENDS

CONSIDERATION.— The chief end proposed by the Church in appointing the Rogation-Days being the public welfare, she appoints means adapted to its attainment. She imposes on all who are not legitimately dispensed a strict abstinence; she appoints solemn public prayers and processions, to which she invites all the faithful, and during which litanies are chanted. In these public prayers, all the different necessities, both of the state and private individuals, are enumerated. What blessings might not be thus obtained if only the people were faithful to what is demanded of them!

APPLICATION.— If we can not join in the public processions, let us at least say the litanies for ourselves in the churches, in the presence of the people. Let us say them with all possible devotion, trying to enter into the spirit of the Church, and uniting ourselves in spirit with those who are singing them so solemnly in procession.

COLLOQUY.— This may be a repetition of those passages of the Litany which relate specially to our necessities during these calamitous times.

LAST APPARITION OF JESUS

BEFORE HIS ASCENSION

1st Prel. Behold Jesus seated at the table with the eleven Apostles.

2d Prel. Beg to be permitted to share the feelings of the Apostles.

POINT I

LOVE OF JESUS FOR HIS APOSTLES

CONSIDERATION.—“He appeared to the eleven as they were at table.” (St. Mark 16:14.) These words clearly demonstrate that His apparition was for the *Apostles alone*, whose number was reduced to eleven by the apostasy of Judas. To them Jesus desired to give the last moments of His glorious life on earth, as to them He had given the last moments before His death. And by sitting at table with them, which is a proof of the greatest intimacy amongst friends, He gave them on both those occasions a proof of His singular love for them. Why did He thus love them? First, because His Father had given them to Him to aid Him in the work of our salvation: “To Me Thou gavest them,” (St. John 17:6;) secondly, because they had forsaken all things to follow Him: “Behold, we have left all things, and have followed Thee,” (St. Matt. 19:27;) and thirdly, because they were destined to labor and suffer more for Him than the other disciples.

APPLICATION.—We also have been chosen by Jesus Christ out of the world to co-operate with Him in the salvation of souls; we also have left all things to follow Him. Have we not, then, some claims upon His love?

AFFECTIONS.—Desire ardently to merit this predilection on the part of our Lord. For this end, offer

yourself to labor and suffer for Him, and for the souls redeemed by His blood.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will henceforth prove myself more generous and devoted in the service of God.

POINT II

ASSURANCE OF HIS PROTECTION

CONSIDERATION.—The hour was fast drawing near when the Apostles and Disciples were about to be forever deprived of the sensible presence of their Divine Master in this world. This thought naturally filled them with trouble and sorrow. To reassure and console them, Jesus declared that He would be separated from them only in appearance, but that in reality He would be always near to help and protect them. He declared this most explicitly, saying, “*Et ecce ego vobiscum sum omnibus diebus usque ad consummationem sæculi.*” “Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.” (St. Matt. 28: 20.)

APPLICATION.—Jesus Christ is, indeed, with us to the present day, not only as God by His immensity, but as Man, by His corporal presence in the Blessed Sacrament, and it may be said, in a manner more advantageous for us than before His Ascension; for then He was successively present only in one place at a time, whereas now He is in many places at once; everywhere, indeed, where there is a congregation of the faithful. Then He could only communicate with men by entering their houses and sitting down with them at table; now He communicates Himself to us by entering our hearts, becoming our food, and incorporating Himself with us. “*Qui manducat meam carnem et bibit meum sanguinem, in me manet, et ego in illo.*” “He that eateth My

flesh and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him." (St. John 6: 57.)

AFFECTIONS.— Acts of admiration and lively gratitude for the goodness, condescension, and generosity manifested by the God-Saviour toward all men, and particularly toward me.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will endeavor to testify my gratitude by increased anxiety to visit, adore, and glorify Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.

POINT III

PROMISE OF THE HOLY GHOST

CONSIDERATION.— The Apostles were fully aware of their ignorance and weakness. They were terrified at the prospect of the difficulties that lay before them, discouraged, disheartened. To revive their fainting hearts, therefore, Jesus gave them the promise of a speedy out-pouring of His Holy Spirit: "Stay you in the city," He said, "till you be endued with power from on high," (St. Luke 24: 49;) and changed into other men.

APPLICATION.— It is good and profitable to be deeply conscious of our weakness and insufficiency, but we must never let ourselves be cast down by this thought; if we are tempted to discouragement, we must instantly turn to Jesus, and invoke with great confidence the aid of the Holy Spirit. He will hasten to enlighten and strengthen us. Have not our discouragements and fretfulness often been caused by our failure in these respects? Let us for the future be more circumspect.

COLLOQUY with the Holy Apostles.

GENERAL REFLECTIONS

ON ALL THE APPARITIONS OF OUR BLESSED LORD

1st Prel. Think of the joy which filled the hearts of the Disciples each time that Jesus appeared to them.

2d Prel. Ask Him to manifest Himself often to your soul, to prepare her for a perfect union with Him in heaven.

POINT I

NUMBER AND MOTIVES OF THE DIFFERENT
APPARITIONS

CONSIDERATION.—The holy Evangelists have recorded only the nine apparitions which form the subjects of the foregoing Meditations; but it is clear, from the very context of their words, that the number was really much greater, especially from the following words of St. Luke: “To whom also He shewed Himself alive, after His Passion, by many proofs, for forty days appearing to them, and speaking of the kingdom of God.” (Acts 1:3.) These frequent manifestations were to confirm the faith of His Apostles and Disciples in His resurrection, to accustom them gradually to His approaching separation from them, and also prove, by so many sudden apparitions, that He was always invisibly present with them.

APPLICATION.—Jesus deals in this manner even now with holy souls; besides being always invisibly present with them, He sometimes gives them sensible tokens of His presence, either by some special illumination, or by causing them to feel a vivid transport of joy and love. This happens frequently in Holy Communion, when He causes them to realize clearly that the bread which they eat is “the living bread which came down from heaven.” (St. John 6:51.) Have

we never experienced these signs of the sensible presence of Jesus?

AFFECTIONS.— Ask of our Lord that He would prepare your soul for the frequent reception of these spiritual visits, which are generally productive of blessed and salutary effects.

RESOLUTIONS.— Examine if by faults more or less habitual you do not place obstacles in the way of these manifestations of the presence of Jesus.

POINT II

TIME AND PLACE OF THE APPARITIONS

CONSIDERATION.— It is impossible to define the exact time or place of the numerous apparitions of our Blessed Lord. They did not take place at regular intervals, but more or less frequently, according to the dispositions of those who were the objects of them; neither were they at any fixed time or place, but sometimes in the night, sometimes in the day, sometimes in the house, and sometimes in the open air.

APPLICATION.— We may learn from these considerations that no position, or employment, or occupation, however distracting, need be any obstacle to the secret communications between our soul and God; and that we need never imagine that we have altogether lost them because we have been for a long time deprived of them. Our chief concern should be to dispose ourselves always to receive them by great purity of heart and fervor.

AFFECTIONS.— Acts of faith in these truths. Ardent desires expressed in these sighs of the prophesying: “Memento nostri, Domine; visita nos in salutari tuo.” “Remember us, O Lord! Visit us with Thy salvation.” (Psalm 105: 4.)

RESOLUTIONS.— To repeat frequently this aspiration.

POINT III

MANNER AND DURATION OF THE APPARITIONS

CONSIDERATION.— They all had these points of resemblance, that they were vouchsafed to only the Apostles and Disciples, and that they were *sudden, unexpected, and of short duration*. Jesus appeared to them when they were least expecting Him, and almost always disappeared from their eyes just when they were most enjoying His presence and conversation.

APPLICATION.— Jesus acted thus, 1st, to show us that He reserves these favors for those who are most truly devoted to Him; 2d, to make us desire His presence and consolations, yet without too great an attachment to them, since they can be neither lasting nor perfect, except in heaven; and finally, that we may keep a constant watch over ourselves, and be at all times prepared to receive His visits.

COLLOQUY with Jesus about to quit the earth, and to ascend into heaven, there to be *crowned with glory and honor*, and *to prepare a place for us*. Thank Him for all He has done for us on earth. Ask Him, like the good thief, for a special remembrance. “Memento mei, Domine, cum veneris in regnum tuum.” “Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy kingdom.” (St. Luke 23: 42.)

FEAST OF THE ASCENSION

1st Prel. Look at Jesus ascending in a cloud from the midst of His disciples.

2d Prel. Beg Him to give you the grace to experience in yourselves something of the same feelings which animated the Apostles.

POINT I

MYSTERIES OF THE FEAST OF THE ASCENSION

CONSIDERATION.—St. Luke relates the circumstances of this great feast in the following words: “And He led them out as far as Bethania; and lifting up His hands, He blessed them: and it came to pass, whilst He blessed them, He departed from them, and was carried up to heaven.” (St. Luke 24: 50, 51.) St. Mark says He was “taken up into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God,” (St. Mark 16: 19;) and St. Luke again, in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, “While they looked on, He was raised up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight; and while they were beholding Him going up to heaven, behold, two men stood by them in white garments, who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, as you have seen Him going into heaven. Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount which is called Olivet.” (Acts 1: 9–12.)

APPLICATION.—Let us try, on this great festival, to gaze with the eyes of our mind upon Jesus rising slowly from the earth, passing through the clouds, making His triumphal entry into heaven, advancing to the foot of His Father’s throne attended by celestial spirits, and receiving a glorious crown, and full power over His enemies. “Sede a dextris meis, donec ponam inimicos tuos scabellum pedum tuorum.” “Sit Thou at my

right hand, until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool." (Psalm 109: 1, 2.) Let us ask Him to draw our hearts to Himself, and to raise our thoughts and affections to heaven, that we may dwell there in spirit, as we pray in the Collect of the Mass.

AFFECTIONS.—Rejoice in the triumph of Jesus. Congratulate Him on the glory and transcendent happiness gained by His sufferings and humiliations.

RESOLUTIONS.—Make a firm determination to labor and suffer much for and with Jesus, in order that you may have the greater share in His glory and felicity.

POINT II

THE JOYFULNESS OF THE FEAST OF THE ASCENSION

CONSIDERATION.—It is said that the disciples returned to Jerusalem "with great joy;" and yet they had just suffered the pain of a most bitter parting. Whence, then, came this joy? Because their Divine Master had returned to His kingdom as a Conqueror. Because, on His entrance into heaven, He opened its gates, which the sin of our first parents had closed, to all believers. Because, by thus exalting His human nature, He ennobled ours, and made it capable of contemplating the Divine nature. Because He had promised to prepare a place for them also in heaven, and to intercede for them with His Father: "Vado parare vobis locum. . . . Ego rogabo Patrem." "I go to prepare a place for you. . . . I will ask the Father." (St. John 14: 2, 16.)

APPLICATION.—Let these be also the motives of our joy. Let us meditate devoutly on them, and engrave them deeply on our hearts, that nothing may ever efface them, and, as our Lord promised His disciples, "Et gaudium vestrum nemo tollet a vobis." "Your joy no man shall take from you." (St. John 16: 22.) In

the midst of whatever tribulations, we will exclaim, with the Apostle, "I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulations." (II. Cor. 7:4.) And again, "Knowing that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so shall you be also of the consolations." (II. Cor. 1:7.)

AFFECTIONS.—"How despicable does the earth appear to me when I look up to heaven." (St. Ignatius.) "Desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ." (Philip. 1:23.)

RESOLUTIONS.—On this day, and during the Octave, I will excite myself to spiritual joy by contemplating the heavens and the beauties of creation, saying with St. Gregory, "If in our exile we find so many beauties, what must it be in our heavenly country?"

POINT III

THE FRUITS OF THE ASCENSION

CONSIDERATION.—The remembrance of this great mystery, and of the promises connected with it, filled the Apostles with a courage and constancy which were proof against all temptations. They all went to meet death joyfully, "rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus," (Acts 5:41;) and declaring that "the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us." (Romans 8:18.)

APPLICATION.—We too shall reap similar fruits from this Meditation, if we keep faithfully in our hearts the thoughts with which it has inspired us. Let us ask our Divine Lord to impress it indelibly upon our hearts.

COLLOQUY with Jesus ascending into heaven. Congratulate Him. Rejoice with Him. Pray that He may bless us as He blessed His Apostles and Disciples.

NOVENA TO THE HOLY GHOST

MOTIVES FOR MAKING THIS NOVENA

1st Prel. Let us behold in spirit the Apostles assembled in the upper chamber at Jerusalem with our Lady.

2d Prel. Let us ask grace to make this Novena with great fervor.

POINT I

EXCELLENCE OF THE NOVENA: FIRST MOTIVE

CONSIDERATION.—Immediately after the Ascension, the Apostles returned to Jerusalem, and, according to the command of their Divine Master, remained in the upper room with Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and the other disciples, in number a hundred and twenty. They continued in prayer, expecting the coming of the Holy Ghost, during *nine days*. From this was derived the practice of preparing for certain great feasts by a Novena of prayers and good works. The Novena of Pentecost was made first by the Apostles, so that it is not only apostolical, but may even be called of Divine institution, since the Apostles made it in obedience to a formal command of Jesus Christ. What, then, must be its excellence, and with what devotion ought we to observe it!

APPLICATION.—If on this account the Novena should be dear to all Christians, it ought to be especially so to us who are religious, and have more in common with the Apostles. Like them, we are enrolled in the army of Jesus Christ; like them, we have left all to follow Him; like them, we have no fixed place of abode, but are always ready to go whithersoever obedience, the glory of God, and the salvation of souls may call us.

AFFECTIONS.—Let us resolve to begin the Novena with good dispositions, placing ourselves under the pro-

tection of Mary, who made it in the company of the Apostles. Let us determine on the special grace that we mean to derive from it, with the fullest confidence that we shall obtain it.

RESOLUTIONS.—To regulate at once the practical details of the Novena, and to carry them out faithfully on this the first day.

POINT II

END AND ADVANTAGES OF THE NOVENA: SECOND MOTIVE

CONSIDERATION.—Why did our Blessed Lord command His Apostles to make this Novena? That they might dispose and prepare themselves to receive the gifts of the Holy Ghost, without which they would have remained forever what they then were — nothing in themselves, and of no use to others; absolutely incapable of attaining the end of their sublime vocation, but with which all would become possible and even easy to them.

APPLICATION.—Why ought we to make this Novena with extraordinary fervor? For the same reasons. For certainly we are not greater than the Apostles; we are not better able than they were to dispense with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and to fulfill the duties of our vocation; to arrive at that degree of perfection which it requires of us, and to save the souls of others both by word and work.

AFFECTIONS.—Let us acknowledge our weakness and inability to realize the good desires of our hearts, saying with the Apostle, “Velle adjacet mihi: perficere autem bonum non invenio.” “To will is present with me, but to accomplish that which is good I find not.” (Rom. 7: 18.) “Come, O Holy Ghost!” “Veni, Sancte Spiritus!” “Sine tuo numine, nihil est in

homine." "Without Thee man is nothing." (Prayer of the Church.)

RESOLUTIONS.— I will often during the day repeat these invocations.

POINT III

NECESSITY OF THIS NOVENA: THIRD MOTIVE

CONSIDERATION.— When our Blessed Lord promised the Holy Ghost to His Apostles, He brought forward a third motive to urge them to a more careful preparation for receiving Him: the wickedness of the world, the miseries of the time in which they lived, the snares that surrounded them, the persecutions that would fall upon them. "*In mundo pressuram habebitis.*" "In the world you shall have distress." (St. John 16: 33.) "*Et ad præsides et ad reges ducemini.*" "You shall be brought before governors and before kings for my sake." (St. Matt. 10: 18.) "*Tradent enim vos in conciliis, et in synagogis vapulabitis.*" "They shall deliver you up to councils, and in the synagogues you shall be beaten." (St. Mark 13: 9.) "*Sed ante hæc omnia iniicient vobis manus suas, et persequentur.*" "They will lay their hands on you, and persecute you." (St. Luke 21: 12.)

APPLICATION.— We too live in days of tribulation, and the rage of the wicked against the religion of Jesus Christ and those who profess it is not diminished. Religious especially are exposed to dangers and persecutions, and need supernatural courage and prudence in dealing with their enemies. Where shall we seek this but from the Spirit of counsel, fortitude, and piety?

COLLOQUY with the Blessed Virgin who was, so to say, the soul of the Apostles during the nine days of their preparation for the coming of the Holy Ghost.

METHOD OF MAKING THE NOVENA

1st Prel. I will attentively consider the Apostles and Disciples, assembled with Mary, and preparing themselves to receive the Holy Ghost.

2d Prel. I will ask the grace to understand and imitate their preparation.

POINT I

RETREAT AND RECOLLECTION OF THE APOSTLES

CONSIDERATION.—"God," says St. Austin, "desires to bestow the gifts of the Holy Spirit abundantly upon us; but He wills that we should rightly dispose ourselves to receive them." How then shall we do this? The example of the Apostles will teach us better than any sermons. They retired into an upper chamber, where they passed their time in recollection and silence, broken only by pious conversations; keeping watch over themselves, and meditating on all that Jesus had taught them, especially on the attributes and operations of the Holy Ghost, whom He had promised to them.

APPLICATION.—If, then, I desire to receive an abundant outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, I must, above all things, during this Novena, keep myself recollected, and be more than ordinarily careful to keep my rule, to observe silence, to guard my senses, and to watch over every irregular affection, so as to avoid the least sin, which would be the chief obstacle to interior peace and a reception of the gifts of God.

AFFECTIONS.—Pray earnestly for light to discover the causes of those distractions which are more or less habitual to you, and for the courage necessary to avoid or overcome them.

RESOLUTIONS.— To make, during this Novena, a particular examination on recollection, and all that it includes.

POINT II

PRAYER AND UNITY OF THE APOSTLES

CONSIDERATION.— To their recollection the Apostles joined continual and earnest prayer, mindful of their Divine Master's words, "*Quanto magis Pater vester de cœlo dabit Spiritum bonum petentibus se.*" "How much more will your Father from heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask Him?" (St. Luke 11:13.) And their prayer was the more efficacious and pleasing to God, because they made it in common, all uniting together in using the same words and asking the same favor. This, too, Jesus had taught them, when He said, "*Si duo ex vobis consenserint super terram de omni re quaecumque petierint, fiet illis a Patre meo, qui in cœlis est.*" "If two of you shall consent upon earth concerning anything whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done to them by My Father who is in heaven." (St. Matt. 18:19.)

APPLICATION.— We, too, during this Novena, must be men of prayer, adding to our ordinary devotions some especially addressed to the Holy Ghost. We can not doubt that God will hear and answer these prayers, since we make them in common, and for the same object, after the example of the Apostles. The words of St. Luke may be applied to our own community: "*Omnes erant perseverantes unanimiter in oratione.*" "All these were persevering with one mind in prayer." (Acts 1:14.)

AFFECTIONS.— I will beg of God to strengthen in me the virtues of hope and confidence with regard to all that the Evangelists teach on the efficacy of prayer.

RESOLUTIONS.— On this day and every day of the

Novena, I will offer special prayers to the Holy Ghost, and in order to guard against forgetfulness, I will fix on the time when I can best recite them.

POINT III

THE APOSTLES HAVE RECOURSE TO MARY

CONSIDERATION.— Convinced of the power of Mary over the Heart of Jesus, the Apostles not only strive to increase their fervor by her example, but entreat her to aid them in their imperfections, and to present their humble petitions to her Divine Son; they persevered in prayer, “cum Maria, Matre Jesu,” “with Mary, the Mother of Jesus.” (Acts i: 14.) It is also the opinion of many of the Fathers that the coming of the Holy Ghost was hastened on account of the powerful intercession of Mary.

APPLICATION.— Let us also seek her intercession; let us beg of her to aid our efforts, to be in the midst of us, and to present our desires to her Divine Son. Let us ask her to obtain for each of us the grace not to forfeit any of the special graces which God may intend to bestow upon us on the Feast of Pentecost.

COLLOQUY.— Paraphrase the beautiful invocation: Pray for us, Holy Mother of God, as thou didst pray for the Apostles, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ, of the glorious promises made by Him to those who prepare worthily to receive the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

ON THE GOSPEL OF THE DAY

THE TESTIMONY BORNE BY THE HOLY GHOST AND
THE APOSTLES TO JESUS

1st Prel. Consider Jesus saying to His Apostles, "When the Paraclete cometh, He shall give testimony of Me, and you shall give testimony." (St. John 15: 26, 27.)

2d Prel. Ask for unbounded confidence in the mysterious operations of the Holy Ghost.

POINT I

HOW THE HOLY GHOST BORE WITNESS TO JESUS

CONSIDERATION.— The Holy Ghost bore witness to Jesus in the most striking manner. He proved to the world that Jesus is the Son of God, the Saviour of men, the Judge of the living and the dead. He led men to worship a crucified God, and to crucify their own flesh with all its concupiscences. He made the cause of Jesus to triumph over all the malice of those who opposed the preaching of His Gospel; He gave courage to women and children, making them despise a cruel death and suffer the most fearful torture for the love of Jesus.

APPLICATION.— Jesus had foretold these marvelous effects of the operation of the Holy Ghost, who was to guide the Church after His Ascension. He had solemnly promised to send Him to the Apostles, telling them that without His help they could do nothing, while with it they would work miracles of conversion and sanctification. He desired, nevertheless, that they should ask for Him, and dispose themselves to receive Him by constant and fervent prayer; and it is only under the same conditions that we can hope to produce any fruit in our labor for souls. Experience must have taught us that, without the co-operation of the

Holy Spirit, all our efforts are vain and fruitless. Hence comes the practice introduced from time immemorial in the Church and in religious communities, of invoking the Holy Ghost before every important undertaking, and even before all the ordinary actions of the day. Do we make this invocation with real piety and devotion?

AFFECTIONS.—An act of faith in the truths on which I have just meditated. Humiliation at the recollection of the many imperfections of which I am guilty in the accomplishment of my religious duties as well as in every action of my life.

RESOLUTIONS.—To endeavor to recite devoutly the prayers which we are accustomed to offer to the Holy Ghost before the principal actions of the day.

POINT II

HOW THE APOSTLES GAVE TESTIMONY TO JESUS

CONSIDERATION.—After saying, “He shall give testimony of Me,” (St. John 15:26,) Jesus immediately added, “and you shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8.) We know how faithfully the Apostles fulfilled this great and glorious mission. They made known their Master’s name in all the world, and caused Him to be adored in spite of all the opposition of men and devils. They destroyed the idols, and overthrew the temples of the false gods of the heathen. They changed the whole world from pagan to Christian, and founded the Church of Jesus Christ, which eighteen centuries have neither changed nor shaken.

APPLICATION.—Observe that they who worked all these miracles were twelve poor fishermen, weak and ignorant persons. Why did the Son of God choose

such instruments to lay the foundations of His Church? First, to prove, by convincing evidence, that it is not a human, but a divine institution, claiming, therefore, our obedience and submission; secondly, that the thought of our own weakness and unworthiness should not deter us from undertaking great things for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

AFFECTIONS.—Let us beg of God that He would fortify our courage by enabling us to see that we are capable of all things when sustained by His Almighty power.

RESOLUTIONS.—When tempted to discouragement, I will reflect on the words of the Apostle: “*Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.*” “I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me.” (Philip. 4: 13.)

POINT III

HOW WE MAY BEAR TESTIMONY TO JESUS

CONSIDERATION.—To bear testimony to Jesus is to work for His glory, to make Him known, loved, and served, by all means in our power. Whoever does this co-operates with the Holy Ghost and the Apostles in the greatest and holiest cause for which it is possible to labor.

APPLICATION.—We who are enrolled in the army of Jesus are under a special obligation to labor for the triumph of this cause. We may do it without being priests or missionaries, by our words, our actions, our prayers, and our example. Do we thus act? Let us see wherein we have hitherto failed, and repair it by redoubled zeal for the future.

COLLOQUY with the Holy Ghost.

THE APOSTLES AND DISCIPLES

AS MODELS OF THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER

1st Prel. Represent to yourselves the Apostles and Disciples in prayer in the upper chamber.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to pray well, after their example.

POINT I

THE APOSTLES PRAY WITH FAITH AND REVERENCE

CONSIDERATION.—According to St. Luke, prayer was the chief occupation of the Apostles and Disciples during the nine days that followed the Ascension. But how did they pray? With great faith, a keen sense of the presence of God, and consequently with great exterior and interior recollection. Since His Ascension, Jesus had no longer been visibly present with them. As man He was parted from them, but as God they knew that He was still in the midst of them, seeing and hearing all that they did. They therefore observed the greatest reverence and modesty both in words and actions.

APPLICATION.—Behold here the first conditions of acceptable prayer. It must be accompanied by a lively faith, and a firm conviction that God sees and hears us, that His eye pierces into the inmost recesses of our hearts, and reads our most secret thoughts. Have we this faith? If so, we shall always be modest and reverent in our exterior, and attentive to our words. This follows as a matter of course. If, therefore, we pray without this reverence and attention, we have but little faith, and our prayers can avail but little.

AFFECTIONS.—Humble yourself at the recollection of the many times that you have addressed the God

of infinite Majesty with disrespect and inattention. Excite yourself to repentance. Ask forgiveness.

RESOLUTIONS.— Before prayer, whether mental or vocal, I will ask myself: Before whom **am** I **about** to appear, and for what purpose?

POINT II

THEY PRAY WITH HUMILITY AND CONFIDENCE

CONSIDERATION.— The prayer of the Apostles and Disciples was accompanied by a deep humility and great confidence. Their humility proceeded from the remembrance of their past infidelities, and their consciousness of their own weakness and inability to accomplish the work intrusted to them. On the other hand, this very weakness led them to place great confidence in the efficacy of prayer, which their Divine Lord had told them would obtain all their desires and supply all their needs.

APPLICATION.—“*Oratio humiliantis se, nubes penetrabit.*” “The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds,” (Ecclus. 35: 21,) says the Wise Man. Have not our prayers often failed for want of humility? and yet how many motives have we for humility! — our past sins, our frequent infidelities, and the uncertainty of our final perseverance. If we keep these things constantly in mind, we shall always pray with a humble and contrite heart, and this will increase both our confidence and our fervor.

AFFECTIONS.— Let us say with the humble and pious King David, “*Respice in me, et miserere mei, quia unicus et pauper sum ego.*” “Look Thou upon me, and have mercy on me, for I am alone and poor.” (Psalm 24: 16.)

RESOLUTIONS.— Before prayer, I will humble myself in the sight of God, considering my miseries

and weakness. I will say often, particularly on entering a church, in the words familiar to a pious hermit, "*Divino conspectu tuo indignissimus.*" "I am unworthy—in every respect, most unworthy—to appear before Thy Divine Majesty."

POINT III

THEY PRAY WITH RESIGNATION AND PERSEVERANCE

CONSIDERATION.— The Apostles prayed with perfect resignation as regarded the time when it might please God to send His Holy Spirit. They knew that He would be granted to their prayers; but being ignorant of the day and hour when He would come, they resolved to persevere for as long as it should please their Divine Lord to keep them in suspense. Their perseverance was rewarded on the tenth day, when they received the fullness of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

APPLICATION.— Have we not sometimes, at least by implication, attached certain conditions to our prayers with regard to time? Because our prayer was not granted at once, we have abandoned it, and so failed in resignation and perseverance. This is the cause of our prayer remaining unanswered: it is our own fault.

COLLOQUY with the Apostles. Beg of them to obtain for you the grace to pray well; and to unite with you, during this important Novena, in order that you may obtain a large share in the diffusion of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

THE APOSTLES

ADOPT MEASURES TO FILL UP THE PLACE OF THE
TRAITOR JUDAS

1st Prel. Consider St. Peter speaking to the other Apostles and Disciples.

2d Prel. Beg the grace of constant fidelity to your vocation.

POINT I

ST. PETER PROPOSES TO CHOOSE A SUCCESSOR TO JUDAS

CONSIDERATION.— In the midst of their prayers, the Apostles did not neglect their duties. These need never interfere with one another. The apostasy of Judas had apparently disturbed the intentions of Jesus, who had chosen *twelve* Apostles to be the witnesses throughout all the world of His Resurrection and His teaching. But the malice of men can not hinder the designs of God. Peter, the head of the Apostolic College, felt himself inspired from on high. St. Luke records that he rose up in the midst of his brethren, and said, "Men, brethren, the Scripture must needs be fulfilled; . . . for it is written in the book of Psalms, . . . And his bishopric let another take. Wherefore of these men who have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus came in and went out among us, . . . one of these must be made a witness with us of His Resurrection." (Acts 1: 16, 20–22.) The whole assembly agreed to the proposition of St. Peter, and at once took steps to ascertain on whom the choice of God would fall.

APPLICATION.— When a religious is tempted to renounce his vocation, let him not be guilty of the folly or vanity of supposing that either the cause of God, or that of his order, will suffer from his defec-

tion. On the contrary, we learn by this example that God will provide a worthier substitute for him. The religious alone will be the loser, and another will wear his crown. I may, perhaps, owe my own vocation to the apostasy of another in the sense that I have been called to fill his place among his brethren.

AFFECTIONS.—What gratitude do I not owe Thee, O Divine Saviour! for having thus singled me out! But, on the other hand, how great should be my circumspection and distrust of myself, lest I, in my turn, should fall away and sin.

RESOLUTIONS.—Frequently to reflect on these words of St. John to the Bishop of Philadelphia: “Tene quod habes, ut nemo accipiat coronam tuam.” “Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.” (Apoc. 3: 11.) For this end, avoid trifling faults, lest you fall, little by little, into greater, at the risk of losing the grace of your vocation.

POINT II

THE ASSEMBLY PROPOSES BARSABAS AND MATTHIAS

CONSIDERATION.—The votes of the assembly being equally divided between “Joseph, called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias,” (Acts 1: 23,) there seemed to be some difficulty and risk of contention in making a decision. To put an end to the doubt, they had recourse to prayer, and cast lots to discover the will of God in the matter. All with one voice said, “Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two Thou hast chosen; . . . and they gave their lots.” (Acts 1: 24, 26.)

APPLICATION.—We, too, sometimes have doubts and perplexities. Shall we ask such a favor, such a dispensation? Shall we apply to some superior for a change of abode, or of employment? We are at a loss

how to decide. Let us follow the example of the Apostles — pray that God would make known His will to us. Have we always acted thus? Have we not mistaken our own desires, or substituted our own will for the will of God?

AFFECTIONS.— “Creating Spirit, come! Enlighten my mind with Thy light, that under Thy guidance I may be saved from sin.” (Office of the Church.)

RESOLUTIONS.— In all doubts I will guard against the inclinations of my sinful nature, and will faithfully comply with the rules laid down by the author of the *Spiritual Exercises*, in order to arrive at a prudent decision.

POINT III

GOD HIMSELF DECIDES IN FAVOR OF MATTHIAS

CONSIDERATION.— “The lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles.” (Acts 1: 26.) The will of God being manifested, every one submitted to it with perfect equanimity, and all discord instantly ceased. All were at once ready to acknowledge the elect of God as one of the twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ; and neither did Matthias show any symptom of pride, nor Barsabas of jealousy.

APPLICATION.— Call to mind, and be ready to practice, the golden rule of St. Austin. “In dubiis libertas: in certis unitas.” “In things doubtful and not decided by authority, let every one be free to think or choose as he will; but in what is authoritatively laid down, let there be perfect unanimity both in thoughts and words.” This rule is an excellent means for preserving peace and charity amongst brethren. Let us be faithful to it, willing to practice, when necessary, perfect self-denial.

COLLOQUY with the newly-elected Apostle St. Matthias.

OUR EXTREME NEED

OF THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST

1st Prel. Consider the Apostles, weak and ignorant men, hiding themselves for fear of the Jews.

2d Prel. Let us ask the gifts of wisdom, understanding, and counsel.

POINT I

WHAT THE APOSTLES WERE, AND WHAT WE ARE, WITHOUT THE GIFT OF WISDOM

CONSIDERATION.— The first gift of the Holy Ghost is *wisdom*, which consists in understanding how to appreciate things at their real value. *Sapientia a sapere*. Before receiving this gift, did the Apostles esteem and value these things of God, and their own eternal salvation, more than all the fleeting pleasures of this world? No, they were men given up to worldly thoughts, preoccupied entirely with the care of their bodies, and the desire to rise in the world by their Master's favor. "There was a strife among them, which of them should seem to be greater," (St. Luke 22: 24,) and besides they cared but little, to watch or pray with Jesus.

APPLICATION.— Behold what the Apostles were, and what we all are, without the gift of wisdom; cold and indifferent in spiritual things, in exercises of piety, humility, mortification, penance; finding a thousand excuses for shortening or omitting them; whilst we are full of activity about worldly matters and all that concerns our temporal welfare. Let us examine ourselves honestly on this point.

AFFECTIONS.— Come, Spirit of Wisdom! Teach me to esteem and love spiritual things, to value the blessings of heaven more highly than the treasures of

this world — to understand and appreciate all that can draw me nearer to God and to the perfection of my state.

RESOLUTIONS.— To repeat this invocation during the day.

POINT II

WHAT THE APOSTLES WERE, AND WHAT WE ARE, WITHOUT THE GIFT OF UNDERSTANDING

CONSIDERATION.— We see clearly in the holy gospels what the Apostles were before they received the gift of understanding, that is to say, before they were supernaturally enlightened so as to comprehend the Divine mysteries. They understood nothing of those “mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” which our Divine Lord explained to them. They always interpreted His words in a material and carnal sense, so as to merit from Him the severe rebuke, “*Adhuc et vos sine intellectu estis?*” “Are ye also yet without understanding?” (St. Matt. 15: 16.)

APPLICATION.— This was their condition, and this also is ours, without the gift of understanding — a condition incapable of comprehending the things of God, or of contemplating His Divine perfections. The very world in which we live exhibits them to us — puts them as it were under our very hand — and yet we do not see them! We are like blind persons before a picture. The most touching spiritual books are read or explained to us, and we understand nothing of them; we are as indifferent as if we had literally no power of comprehension. Is not this but too true?

AFFECTIONS.— *Veni, Sancte Spiritus, et emitte celitus lucis tuæ radium.*” “Come, Holy Ghost, enlighten me with a ray of Thy Heavenly light.” (Hymn of the Church;) without which, having eyes, I see not — having ears, I hear not — having under-

standing, I remain yet in darkness; but with which, as I feel assured, all that is dark will for me be turned into light.

RESOLUTIONS.—As in the preceding Point.

POINT III

WHAT THE APOSTLES WERE, AND WHAT WE ARE, WITHOUT THE GIFT OF COUNSEL

CONSIDERATION.—What were the Apostles without the gift of counsel? Inconstant and vacillating in their thoughts, their affections, their conduct; drifting with the stream; feeble and inconsistent. Desiring to follow Jesus in the way of the evangelical counsels, and yet cherishing earthly hopes in their hearts. One day full of zeal and courage, the next cast down and sad.

APPLICATION.—Such also are we without the gift of counsel. Full of hesitation, darkness of mind, and false judgments, which make us the sport of our own imagination, of the illusions of the devil, and of circumstances. Beginning and breaking off, willing and not willing, changeable as the wind, inconstant in everything, unable to make any solid progress. Is not this often a subject of complaint with us before God?

COLLOQUY with the Holy Ghost in conformity with the foregoing AFFECTIONS.

CONTINUATION OF THE PRECEDING SUBJECT

1st Prel. Imagine you see the Apostles assembled in the upper chamber.

2d Prel. Beg earnestly for the gifts of fortitude, knowledge, piety, and the fear of the Lord.

POINT I

WHAT WERE THE APOSTLES, AND WHAT ARE WE, WITHOUT THE GIFT OF FORTITUDE?

CONSIDERATION.—Before being endued with “power from on high,” the Apostles were indeed men of good-will, but weak, timid, and cowardly in the extreme. At the Last Supper they all made strong protestations of fidelity to their Divine Master, and declared themselves ready to follow Him to prison and to death; and yet the moment they saw Him taken by the soldiers of the high-priest, they all forsook Him and fled.

APPLICATION.—Is not this a faithful picture of our own state when we are left to ourselves? Strong in promises, protests, and good resolutions, but weak and cowardly when it comes to putting them into practice. Breaking our firmest resolutions almost as soon as we have made them; yielding to the very smallest temptation; always finding some excuse for neglecting some point of our rule, or some duty of our office; often unable to make the slightest effort in even a trivial matter, such as awaking at our appointed time.

AFFECTIONS.—Confession of sin; humiliation. The invocation: Come, Spirit of Might, sustain me, that I may overcome those obstacles which have hitherto impeded my progress in the way of perfection.

RESOLUTIONS.—Frequently to repeat this invocation.

POINT II

WHAT WERE THE APOSTLES, AND WHAT ARE WE, WITHOUT THE GIFT OF KNOWLEDGE?

CONSIDERATION.—Our Divine Lord wished to convince the world that His religion was not the work of men. He therefore made choice, for its propagation, of twelve Galilean fishermen — poor, ignorant, uneducated, unintellectual, caring only for the trade by which they gained their livelihood. Such were the Apostles, and such they would always have remained, without the gift of knowledge, which they received at Pentecost.

APPLICATION.—If we happen to be better educated, and to have more opportunities of progress in secular learning, let us at least admit that we are but very little advanced in the science of the Saints, and that we have cared less to perfect ourselves therein than to study other matters which are comparatively vain and unprofitable, though we are bound as religious to aim at a high degree of sanctity, and to bring others to it by our example and teaching.

AFFECTIONS.—Invoke the Holy Ghost, the author of all good, the indispensable and infallible guide of those who devote themselves to the science of holiness.

RESOLUTIONS.—To strive henceforth with greater ardor and perseverance to advance in the science of the Saints. Always to recite with great attention, the prayer usually addressed to the Holy Ghost, before study and spiritual reading.

POINT III

WHAT WERE THE APOSTLES, AND WHAT ARE WE, WITHOUT THE GIFTS OF PIETY AND THE FEAR OF GOD?

CONSIDERATION.—How imperfect was the love of the Apostles for their Divine Master! It was far less a pure sentiment of childlike affection than the spirit of self-interest and egotism. They loved Him more for their own sakes than for His. Hence came the cowardice and treachery of their conduct toward Him, especially at the time of His Passion and Death.

APPLICATION.—Have we not similar conduct to reproach ourselves with? Do we really love God for Himself, and not for our own advantage? When we abstain from offending Him, is it not chiefly to avoid the punishment of sin, the torments of hell, the sufferings of purgatory? And when we make voluntary acts of any virtue, is it not chiefly for the sake of the reward promised to them? These dispositions are certainly not sinful or even blameworthy, but they are far removed from that *piety*, *filial fear*, and *perfect charity* infused into the hearts of the Apostles by the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost.

COLLOQUY with the Holy Ghost. Beg earnestly for a share in the noble sentiments of those children of God, truly worthy of the name, who love Him for His own sake as their Sovereign Good, and who dread sin because they fear above all else to displease their Beloved Father.

ON THE PRINCIPAL ENDS

OF THE COMING OF THE HOLY GHOST

- 1st Prel.* Represent to yourself Jesus saying to His Apostles, "If I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you."
2d Prel. Ask the grace to attain the ends proposed by God in the descent of the Holy Ghost.

POINT I

THE HOLY GHOST CAME TO CONSOLE THE APOSTLES

CONSIDERATION.—In order to keep up our fervor till the end of the Novena, let us meditate on the great ends for which our Blessed Lord promised to send the Holy Ghost upon His Apostles and Disciples. First, it was that He might be with them after His own Ascension, to take His place in comforting and encouraging them in all the trials of life, and especially in the hard labors of their apostolate. "A little while, and now you shall not see me," He had said to them, "because I go to the Father." (St. John 16:16.) "I will not leave you orphans. . . . I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever." (St. John 14:18, 16.) His promise was fulfilled. When they first began to preach, the Apostles were beaten and cast into prison; but, far from being disheartened or afflicted, they "ibant gaudentes a conspectu concilii," "went from the presence of the council rejoicing." (Acts 5:41.) The Holy Ghost worked the same miracle for the early Christians, though subjected to the most dreadful persecutions; for St. Luke writes that "The Church. . . . was filled with the consolation of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 9:31.)

APPLICATION.— We also must expect to meet with many trials, difficulties, and contradictions in fulfilling the duties of our state; but if the Holy Ghost be with us, we shall endure them not only with resignation, but with joy, and crosses and humiliations will become our greatest delight. How diligently, then, ought we to seek and to entertain this blessed Spirit!

AFFECTIONS.—“Veni, Sancte Spiritus, Consolator optime, in fletu solatium.” “Come, Holy Ghost, Consolation and support of the afflicted.” (Hymn of the Church.)

RESOLUTIONS.—To recite this invocation during times of affliction and distress.

POINT II

HE WAS TO BE THEIR GUIDE

CONSIDERATION.— The second end which God had in view in sending down the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles was to shed upon their souls the clear light of faith, and to give them a more perfect understanding of the truths which Jesus had only partially revealed, and also to show them things to come. We know this from the words which our Blessed Lord addressed to them on the eve of His death: “I have yet many things to say to you; but you can not bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will teach you all truth, . . . and the things that are to come He shall show you.” (St. John 16: 12, 13.)

APPLICATION.— What the Holy Ghost did for the Apostles and early Christians, He will do also for all who strive to attract Him into their hearts and retain Him there. It is for this reason that, on all important occasions, the Church begins by imploring the light and assistance of the Holy Ghost, and that the practice has obtained in religious communities of reciting fre-

quently during the day either the *Veni Creator*, or the *Veni Sancte Spiritus*. How do we make these invocations? with our lips only, or with our hearts also? Let us examine ourselves on this point.

AFFECTIONS.—Thanksgiving to the Holy Spirit, by whom you have so often been enlightened, guided, and protected in difficult and critical circumstances. Pray for a continuance of this Divine assistance.

RESOLUTIONS.—To guard against the dangerous habit of reciting your usual prayers as a form, without attention or devotion.

POINT III

HE WAS TO IMPART A DIVINE UNCTION TO THEIR WORDS

CONSIDERATION.—The Apostles were to glorify Jesus Christ not only in themselves, but in others, by making them know, love, and practice His Divine teaching, by inspiring them with a horror of vice and love of virtue; in a word, by making them saints. The third end of the descent of the Holy Ghost was to enable them to accomplish this task, so far beyond their natural strength. “For,” said our Blessed Lord, “I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist and gainsay.” (St. Luke 21:15.) “For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.” (St. Matt. 10:20.)

COLLOQUY with the Holy Ghost in conformity with the foregoing **AFFECTIONS** and **RESOLUTIONS**.

THE DISPOSITIONS

SUITABLE FOR THE COMING OF THE HOLY GHOST

1st Prel. Let us represent to ourselves the assembly in the upper chamber.

2d Prel. Let us ask grace to prepare ourselves for the great feast of to-morrow, by recollection, prayer, and union with Mary.

POINT I

RECOLLECTION

CONSIDERATION.— We are approaching the end of our Novena; let us, then, renew our fervor, that we may not lose its fruits. Let us call to mind, and put in practice with redoubled ardor, all the means that may conduce to that end. The first of these is recollection, which produces peace in the soul and union with God. The Apostles sought it in retirement from the world, in silence and solitude.

APPLICATION.— If we can not spend this day in retirement from the distractions of the world, in silence and retreat; if the preparations for to-morrow's feast even add to our ordinary interruptions and occupations — let us try to make a solitude in our hearts, a kind of secret chamber into which we may retire; let us avoid all the causes of dissipation, such as over-eagerness in our work, unnecessary conversations, useless goings to and fro; let us keep guard carefully over our senses, and observe strictly the rules of modesty and silence, that we may be "interior men, closely united to God, lending, but not giving, ourselves to exterior things." (*Imitation.*)

AFFECTIONS.— Beg earnestly of the Holy Spirit that He would Himself instruct you in the difficult art of

combining interior recollection with a due attention to your daily occupations.

RESOLUTIONS.— To maintain the better this spirit of recollection, anticipate the different circumstances of time and place which are likely to interfere with it.

POINT II

PRAYER

CONSIDERATION.— Prayer is the second means which was pointed out from the first day of the Novena as indispensable for obtaining a large outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. The Apostles might have seemed to be excused from it, since they had received from Jesus Christ Himself the *assurance* that the Holy Ghost would come down to them with all His gifts; but yet they never ceased to pray earnestly for Him, until they had received Him. They knew well that the gifts of God, though liberally bestowed and by His free grace, ought also to be the fruits of persevering prayer. To make it more efficacious, let us join to it mortification. The Church reminds us of this by prescribing a fast.

APPLICATION.— Let us call to mind the days of the Novena that have already passed, and examine if there has been any relaxation in our prayers. Our inconstancy makes it but too probable; and if we find it to have been the case, let us try to-day to compensate for it by redoubled fervor. Do not say that your numerous occupations to-day will hinder you from praying much; for Holy Scripture says, “Non impediatis orare semper.” “Let nothing hinder thee from praying always.” (Ecclus. 18: 22.) We do not pray with our hands, but with our hearts. Let your external occupations be accompanied by frequent raisings of your heart toward God, and they will

be changed into prayers. We may thus pray all day long without interruption.

AFFECTIONS.—Come, Holy Ghost, take possession of my heart, and enkindle in it the fire of Thy love.

RESOLUTIONS.—Frequently during the day to recite this or a similar aspiration.

POINT III

INVOCATION OF OUR LADY

CONSIDERATION.—There is a third means which adds greatly to the efficacy of the two preceding. We have not neglected to mention it before; but we must take special notice of it to-day, the last of the Novena. This means is the intercession of our Lady, of whom the world's Redeemer was born, and "*totum nos Deus voluit habere per Mariam*," "through whose intercession," says St. Bernard, "God wishes that all our petitions be granted."

APPLICATION.—Let us, then, to-day fix our eyes upon our glorious and powerful Mother. Let us ask her with great confidence to unite her prayers to ours, as she united them on this day to those of the Apostles and Disciples, and to obtain for us, as she did for them, a copious outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. We should do well to insert her name in all our ejaculatory prayers, and we shall do this the more readily as Saturday is always consecrated to her honor.

COLLOQUY with the Blessed Virgin.

FEAST OF PENTECOST

1st Prel. Behold with the eye of faith the upper chamber at the moment of the descent of the Holy Ghost.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to understand rightly the threefold object of this great feast—the descent of the Holy Ghost, the promulgation of the Gospel, and the establishment of the Church.

POINT I

THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST ON THE APOSTLES
AND DISCIPLES

CONSIDERATION.—Ten days after His Ascension, and on the fiftieth day after Easter, (*Pentecostes*,) Jesus fulfilled the promise He had so often made to His Apostles of sending His Holy Spirit. We read in the second chapter of the Acts that “when the days of the Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in one place: and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak.” (Acts 2: 1, 2, 3, 4.) It is in these few and simple words that St. Luke records the great and mysterious event which substituted the Christian feast of Pentecost for the Jewish one; an event which changed the Apostles in one moment from carnal and ignorant into spiritual and eloquent men, eminent both in wisdom and holiness, gifted with an invincible zeal and courage, and thenceforward fully capable of executing their great commission of evangelizing mankind and changing the whole face of the earth.

APPLICATION.—We celebrate to-day the anniversary of this great event, and that not only by

commemorating it as we commemorate our Lord's resurrection at Easter, but by seeking to renew it within ourselves. In this respect, the feast of Pentecost differs from all others; for others are feasts of gratitude for past mercies, whereas in this we celebrate a mystery which is continually renewed in the Church, and which will be renewed in the souls of the faithful, even to the end of the world. At this very day we may venture, according to the promise of Jesus Christ, to ask, and to expect with the same confidence as the Apostles, the descent of the Holy Ghost upon ourselves, and the communication of His gifts. Among all the Christians who have been making this Novena, many will receive this great favor, though not outwardly, that being now no longer necessary. May we be among this number!

AFFECTIONS.—Faith in the promises of Christ, hope, earnest prayer. “Veni, Creator Spiritus, mentes tuorum visita.” “Come, Holy Spirit, visit the hearts of the faithful.” Replenish my heart with Thy gifts, with the fire of Thy love, and zeal for the salvation of souls.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will frequently during the day renew these affections and prayers.

POINT II

THE PROMULGATION OF THE GOSPEL

CONSIDERATION.—The second event of which we celebrate the anniversary to-day is the promulgation of the Gospel. Beginning at Jerusalem on the feast of Pentecost, and blessed with extraordinary success by the conversion and baptism of three thousand Jews, it extended rapidly over all the known world through the inspired preaching of the Apostles. Even during their lifetime, Jesus was abroad in every nation under the sun. The prophecy was fulfilled, “Et renovabis

faciam terræ." "Thou shalt renew the face of the earth," (Psalm 103: 30;) and "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." (Joel 2: 28.)

APPLICATION.—Through the uninterrupted succession of Sovereign Pontiffs, Bishops, and priests, successors of St. Peter, of the Apostles, and of the seventy-two disciples, the Gospel, with all its spiritual and temporal advantages, has reached us. On this day we commemorate this great blessing, and render thanks for it to Almighty God. All are bound to do this; but for us who are religious it is not enough. We have been called to an apostolic life and work, and we must to-day renew our zeal, and examine whether, by our words, our example, our prayers, our works of penance, in short, by all the means within our power, we contribute as much as in us lies to extend the kingdom of God among souls. Let us see wherein we have failed, and how we can do better for the future.

AFFECTIONS and RESOLUTIONS, as in the preceding Point.

POINT III

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH

CONSIDERATION.—The nations who were converted by the preaching of the Apostles, although so different in disposition and character, yet formed but one family, having the same faith, the same laws, the same Sacraments, the same Head. This great family, spread over the whole world, is the Church of Jesus Christ — one, holy, catholic. For more than eighteen hundred years the "gates of hell" have fought against it; but they have not prevailed, and never shall prevail. We celebrate to-day the memory of its establishment. This is the third object of the great solemnity of Pentecost.

COLLOQUY with the Holy Ghost.

MYSTERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES

OF THE FEAST OF PENTECOST

1st Prel. Imagine you see the Apostles filled with divine love.

2d Prel. Ask for the most loving and childlike devotion to Jesus Christ and His holy Church.

POINT I

THE TIME OF THIS FEAST

CONSIDERATION.— The Christian Pentecost occurred on a Sunday, the fiftieth day after the Sunday of the Resurrection. That day was the one following the Great Sabbath, or Jewish Pasch; from whence it follows that the descent of the Holy Ghost did not take place on the Jewish Pentecost, but on the day following. (Cornelius à Lapide, in Act. Apost.) This circumstance, divinely ordained, inaugurated a great and solemn mystery, namely, *the succession of the New Law to the Old*. The Old Law, suited to the hard-heartedness of the Jews, was a law of *fear* and *bondage*, given in the midst of thunders, engraved on *stone*; the New Law, on the contrary, is a law of *love* and *liberty*, written by the Holy Ghost Himself on the hearts of the faithful, when He fills them with the interior spirit of love and filial piety.

APPLICATION.— Let us thank God for having been born and baptized under the law of grace, and seek to perfect in ourselves the interior law of love. This must be done in three ways: 1st, we must treat God with the greatest confidence, like a tender Father, and not a hard master or severe tyrant; 2d, we must be actuated always by the spirit of love, and not by that of fear; 3d, we must serve God our Lord for Himself, and not for the sake of any reward. What is our

state in this respect? Have we a true spirit of love? What progress have we made therein?

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for grace fully to comprehend these words, addressed by the Apostle to the Christians of Rome: “*Nom enim accepistis spiritum servitutis iterum in timore, sed accepistis spiritum adoptionis filiorum, in quo clamamus, Abba, (Pater.)*” “You have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear; but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry, Abba, (Father.)” (Romans 8: 15.)

RESOLUTIONS.— Repeat often this pious aspiration of St. Francis Xavier: “I love Thee, O my God! not because Thou dost threaten with hell those who do not love Thee nor yet because Thou dost promise heaven to those who love Thee, but because Thou art my God and my all.”

POINT II

THE PLACE

CONSIDERATION.— On the Day of Pentecost, the twelve Apostles, presided over by St. Peter, and all the other faithful disciples, were assembled, with Mary in the midst of them, in the upper room already consecrated by the mysteries of the Last Supper. This was the place chosen by the Holy Ghost to communicate Himself to men, and which He filled throughout with His divine breath. This house, we are told, represents the Church, or “the assembly of the faithful who profess the true doctrine of Jesus Christ, under obedience to the successor of St. Peter.” (*Mechlin Catechism.*) There alone is the Holy Spirit given; from thence alone flow the holy Sacraments, the only true means of eternal salvation. “There is no salvation out of the Church.”

APPLICATION.— What a blessed privilege to have the Church for our Mother! Through her we inherit

eternal life. She showers down fresh graces upon us every day. What return can we make to her? We can love her, honor her by the purity of our lives, pray earnestly that God would render her victorious over her enemies, and give her the whole world for her inheritance, according to the promise of our Blessed Lord; and offer to God for these ends our health, our talents, our learning, and even our lives. Can we do more? Yes; we can use all our influence with others to induce them to love and honor the Holy Church, and to undertake her defense against her enemies. We can recommend and endeavor to spread that excellent institution, the Propagation of the Faith. Let us examine what we have done, what we have not done, and what we intend to do.

COLLOQUY with our Beloved Saviour, who in sending us the Holy Spirit has loaded us with the gifts of His grace. Lay at His feet our protestations of love and gratitude, our desires, offerings, and resolutions. Beg of Him to bless them, and render them efficacious.

THE OUTWARD SIGNS

EMPLOYED BY THE HOLY GHOST IN THE MYSTERY OF PENTECOST

1st Prel. To see the tongues of fire which rested on the heads of the Apostles and Disciples.

2d Prel. To ask for grace to comprehend the mystery hidden under the symbols of wind and tongues of fire.

POINT I

THE SYMBOL OF A MIGHTY WIND

CONSIDERATION.—“And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a mighty wind coming.” (Acts 2:2.) By the rushing sound of a whirlwind approaching the house and being arrested there, the Holy Ghost desired to warn the Apostles of His coming, and also to attract a large concourse of people, so as to give an opportunity for the preaching of the Gospel; and that they might, by baptizing a great number of Jews, lay on that very day the foundation of the Church, substituting it for the synagogue. This symbol was, moreover, a singularly appropriate one; for it represented the vehemence of the zeal with which the Apostles would preach the Gospel throughout the world, and in spite of all obstacles.

APPLICATION.—Let us ask the Holy Spirit to breathe into our souls His Divine inspiration, detaching them from all earthly objects, and raising them up to heaven. Let us ask Him to fill all the powers of our souls, as He “filled the whole house where they (the Apostles) were sitting.” (Acts 2:2.) We have every reason to hope for such a favor; but we must not be discouraged if we do not immediately obtain it, remembering that “the Spirit breatheth where He

will." (St. John 3:8.) He will come, as it has been foretold of Him, *suddenly*, and when we least expect Him.

AFFECTIONS.—O breath of the Divine Spirit! elevate my thoughts above the earth, that my virtues may correspond with my holy vocation.

RESOLUTIONS.—To endeavor so to live, particularly during this day, as to merit to receive the visits or inspirations of the Holy Ghost.

POINT II

THE SYMBOL OF TONGUES

CONSIDERATION.—No sooner were the Apostles warned of the coming of the Holy Ghost than "there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them." (Acts 2:3.) Why did Almighty God choose this outward sign of the presence of His Holy Spirit? Because it was the Holy Spirit alone who could so inspire the tongues of the Apostles as to enable them to preach the Gospel in all the world. For this purpose the *gift of tongues* was bestowed upon them, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles: "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues." (Acts 2:4.)

APPLICATION.—Our tongues are, perhaps, not intended to be employed like those of the Apostles or apostolic missionaries; but we are certainly bound to use them for the glory of God and the benefit of our neighbor; especially we who are consecrated to God by religious vows. Let us remember that the *gift of speech*, of which the *gift of tongues* is only an extension, is one of the most precious gifts of God to man. He will demand a strict account of our use or abuse thereof, and how rare is it to find any one who never

abuses it! St. James says, “Si quis in verbo non offendit, hic perfectus est vir.” “If any one offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.” (St. James 3:2.) We have, indeed, here sufficient matter for self-examination.

AFFECTIONS.—Ask pardon for the irreligious use you have so often made of your tongue, and devote it henceforth to the service and glory of God.

RESOLUTIONS.—Renew the determination to introduce some subject of an edifying nature into every conversation.

POINT III

THE SYMBOL OF FIRE

CONSIDERATION.—It is said that these tongues were “as it were of fire.” It is the nature of fire to enlighten, warm, dilate, purify, consume; it therefore rightly represents the operations of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of the Apostles. He illuminated them with the light of faith; He enkindled in them the love of God and their neighbor; He enlarged their hearts, so that thenceforward God alone could fill them, and the earth seemed too limited for their zeal; He purified them from every stain, and transformed them so that in a manner henceforth they had the same spirit with Him.

APPLICATION.—The Holy Ghost still performs the same miracles in the hearts of those who receive Him, especially during the feast of Pentecost. Why should He not work them in our regard? The Novena we have just completed, and His own desire to impart His gifts to us, ought to give us the fullest confidence. Let us ask, and we shall receive.

COLLOQUY with the Blessed Virgin. Beg of her to obtain for us, as for the Apostles and Disciples, the gifts of the Holy Ghost in abundance, and especially that one of them of which we stand most in need.

MIRACULOUS OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY GHOST

IN THE HEARTS OF THE APOSTLES

1st. Prel. Let us behold the eyes of the Apostles glistening with the fire which fills them.

2d Prel. Let us ask to be partakers of the miraculous effects of the operations of the Holy Ghost in the Apostles.

POINT I

WONDERFUL TRANSFORMATION OF THE APOSTLES

CONSIDERATION.— Simultaneously with the appearance of the tongues, the Apostles were all “filled with the Holy Ghost,” and transformed into quite different men: from being timid, proud, vacillating, and sinful, they became suddenly marvels of knowledge, strength, humility, constancy, and holiness — purified from all stain of sin, and confirmed in sanctifying grace. What their Divine Master had not chosen to do Himself in the course of three years was accomplished by the Holy Ghost in one moment, and without any effort on the part of the Apostles.

APPLICATION.— The Holy Ghost still performs the same miracles, though less sensibly, in the hearts of those who are docile to His inspirations, and especially when they receive the holy Sacraments worthily. We receive them frequently, and yet we complain of being so little illuminated in Divine things — so weak, so ready to fall under temptation, so constantly relapsing into the same faults and imperfections; almost always in a state of tepidity. Let us examine if the fault is not entirely in ourselves — in our negligence, or want of fervor in receiving the Sacraments.

AFFECTIONS.— Humble yourself before God.

Thank Him for the pious emotions which, notwithstanding your tepidity, you have frequently experienced, especially in the Holy Communion.

RESOLUTIONS.—Always to prepare carefully for receiving the Sacraments.

POINT II

ADMIRABLE ZEAL OF THE APOSTLES

CONSIDERATION.—The first use which the Apostles made of the gifts of understanding and of tongues was to publish the glory and greatness of God; and by their burning zeal and eloquent words to make Jesus, His Divine Son, known, loved, glorified, and obeyed. This was the language of the Holy Ghost, in opposition to the language of the world, which prompts us to speak of ourselves, and praise our own works, seeking thereby to obtain esteem and admiration.

APPLICATION.—Are we influenced by the Spirit of God, or by the spirit of the world and of vainglory? If we take pleasure in speaking of God; if we seek to bring the lost sheep into the true Church, and to make known the religion of Jesus Christ, we speak the language of the Holy Ghost; but if, on the contrary, we speak only of ourselves, we may conclude that He does not really dwell in our hearts, since it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaketh.

AFFECTIONS.—Beg earnestly of the Holy Ghost that He may reign over your heart, and direct and sanctify your speech.

RESOLUTIONS.—To be vigilant in watching for and seizing every opportunity of contributing to the glory of God; and of leading others to appreciate the perfections and blessings of religion.

POINT III

ADMIRABLE CONSTANCY OF THE APOSTLES

CONSIDERATION.— The zeal of the Apostles quickly raised them up enemies: the wicked turned them into ridicule, the Scribes calumniated them, the princes of the people had them cast into prison and beaten with rods, and even threatened them with death, if they dared to preach any more in the name of Jesus. But, far from being alarmed or discouraged, the Apostles only continued with redoubled zeal to preach Jesus and the Resurrection, answering any who sought to hinder them in the memorable words, “If it be just in the sight of God to hear you rather than God, judge ye. For we can not but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” (Acts 4: 19, 20.) “We ought to obey God rather than men.” (Acts 5: 29.)

APPLICATION.— If we act in like manner, we shall meet with the like treatment: we shall be unjustly accused, calumniated, persecuted. But let us not therefore be discouraged. We must not regulate our conduct according to the world’s praise or blame, but according to the law of God, the rules of our order, and the commands of our superior and spiritual guides. If we act thus, we shall be secure from error, and our zeal will be discreet, faithful, and blessed with success both for ourselves and our neighbors.

COLLOQUY with the Blessed Virgin, as in the preceding Meditation.

FIRST SERMON OF ST. PETER

1st Prel. Imagine that you behold the Apostles standing in the midst of a crowd of Jews eager to hear them speak.

2d Prel. Ask grace to proclaim the word of God, or to hear it proclaimed, so as to obtain great fruit.

POINT I

THE AUDIENCE OF ST. PETER

CONSIDERATION.—The strange report of the “mighty wind” had attracted a great crowd to the house inhabited by the Apostles. There were then, as St. Luke tells us, “dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven,” (Acts 2:5;) Jews who faithfully observed the obligation of visiting the Temple once every year. St. Peter’s audience therefore consisted of persons of every nation and of every tongue; so that we may justly say he spoke to the whole world, since his hearers would be sure, on their return to their homes, to publish abroad the words of the Apostle, and the striking miracle which accompanied them; namely, “that every man heard them speak in his own tongue.” (Acts 2:6.) Thus the seed of the Gospel was sown throughout the world, even before the dispersion of the Apostles, who had afterward only to water and make it fruitful, causing it to bring forth numerous Christian communities.

APPLICATION.—Let us here observe how admirably Divine Providence adapts the means to the ends which are to be accomplished, or to the work appointed to men. The mission of the Apostles was to publish the Gospel throughout the whole world, and to found the Catholic or Universal Church. But how could they do this? The wonderful circumstances we have just recorded will supply the answer. Let us then trust

God implicitly, and rest assured of His assistance in all the labors required of us by obedience, in all the difficulties and sacrifices which the obligation of aiming at perfection imposes upon us. He will supply all our needs, even, if it should be necessary, by miraculous interference.

AFFECTIONS.— Place yourself, with an act of confidence and resignation, forever and without reserve, in the hands of Divine Providence.

RESOLUTIONS.— In difficult circumstances, reflect on these words of Abraham: “Deus providebit.” “God will provide.” (Gen. 22 : 8.)

POINT II

ST. PETER'S DISCOURSE

CONSIDERATION.— Let us consider its matter and its form. Its matter was simply a collection of texts from Holy Scripture, announcing the coming of the Holy Ghost, and its marvelous effects; together with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, the promised Messiah, that Just One whom, as St. Peter told his hearers, they themselves had rejected and crucified. In its form we see a wonderful freedom and energy of expression, united with rare prudence and wisdom. Instead of beginning with harsh rebukes, which would only have exasperated his hearers, the Apostle calls their attention to the various prophecies, and shows them, with masterly eloquence, how they had been deceived by their rulers into demanding the death of their Redeemer, “the Author of life!” (Acts 3 : 15.) This was the surest way to lead them to repent and condemn themselves; as, in fact, it actually happened.

APPLICATION.— If we have to correct or punish others, let us imitate the conduct of the Apostle, which was inspired by the Holy Ghost. Let us first

endeavor by all means to convince the guilty of their error, and to lead them to acknowledge it. But let us avoid all harsh and bitter expressions, and suppose that their conduct has arisen from ignorance, or the persuasion of others. In this manner we shall gain their hearts, and obtain all that we desire from them. If we have to receive correction, let us behold in him who administers it a tender father performing a painful duty only for our good.

AFFECTIONS.—Pray for the grace necessary to regulate your conduct by these wise rules.

RESOLUTIONS.—To recollect yourself before administering a reproof. To anticipate any reproof you may have deserved by accusing yourself in the first instance; as it is written: “*Justus prior est accusator sui.*” “The just is first accuser of himself.” (Prov. 18: 17.)

POINT III.

SUCCESS OF ST. PETER

CONSIDERATION.—This was most marvelous: three thousand persons were converted to the true faith, placed themselves under the direction of the Apostles, were baptized, and received the gift of the Holy Ghost. Five thousand more soon followed their example. The Church was founded and organized, and even during the lifetime of the Apostles was spread “to the ends of the whole world.”

APPLICATION.—We must never despair of the success of any work undertaken with a good intention; though we must look for it not to our efforts, but to the assistance of the Holy Ghost. Have we not sometimes forgotten this?

COLLOQUY with the Apostle St. Peter.

MIRACULOUS OPERATIONS

OF THE HOLY GHOST IN THE EARLY CHRISTIANS

1st Prel. Behold the first Christians assembled with the Apostles to sing the praises of God.

2d Prel. Ask the Holy Ghost to renew in our souls what He effected in theirs.

POINT I

MARVELOUS DETACHMENT

CONSIDERATION.—The gifts of wisdom and of understanding, so plentifully bestowed upon the early Christians, had a marvelous effect in entirely weaning their affections from earthly possessions and honors. These things became thenceforward only obstacles and hinderances to them in the acquisition of heavenly treasures. Therefore, “their possessions and goods they sold, and divided them to all, according as every one had need;” . . . “and had all things common.” (Acts 2: 45, 44.) Thus, being free from all worldly cares, they thought only of heavenly things. They enjoyed great peace and joy, serving God without distraction or hinderance.

APPLICATION.—We too have been taught by the Holy Ghost that Christian perfection consists in entire detachment from earthly goods; and have also received the grace to renounce them at once and forever by the vow of holy poverty in a religious order approved by the Church. Happy poverty! happy community-life! it gives us all the advantages enjoyed by the early Christians, until it will put us in possession of the goods of eternal life, according to our Blessed Lord’s promise: “Every one that hath left house or brethren . . . for My Name’s sake, shall receive an

hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting." (St. Matt. 19: 29.)

AFFECTIONS.— Gratitude, joy, renewal of the vow of poverty, so justly styled the rampart of religion.

RESOLUTIONS.— Examine yourself on your fidelity in observing the rules of poverty. Endeavor to comply with them *all* in a spirit of faith and love.

POINT II

MARVELOUS CHARITY

CONSIDERATION.— Not less wonderful in the eyes of the world than the spirit of poverty was the spirit of love and union which reigned among the early Christians. Although differing in nation, in manners, in habits, all were so united in heart and mind that, as St. Luke says, "they had but one heart and one soul," (Acts 4: 32;) they spoke the same language, they prayed together, they ate together, they shared the same joys, and were ready to share the same sorrows and to make the same sacrifices. Men were constrained to believe in the Divine origin of a religion which produced such fruits, and the number of converts increased daily.

APPLICATION.— The works of God are the same in every age; the love and fraternal union which the Holy Ghost inspired in the early Christians, to the astonishment of a self-seeking world, still flourish in religious communities, as we can joyfully testify. Let us show our gratitude by carefully avoiding all that could injure the perfection of community-life, such as singularity, contention, particular friendships, or special privileges; desiring nothing more than to be in all things like our brethren; loving them with a supernatural charity, in all sincerity and simplicity, and always ready to do them service, even at the cost of our own ease and comfort.

AFFECTIONS.— Pray to the Holy Ghost that He may perfect in us the virtues of charity and fraternal union, that our community may be a subject of edification to all, and may attract many to practice the evangelical counsels.

RESOLUTIONS.— To examine in what way we can and ought to contribute to this end; and make our resolutions accordingly.

POINT III

MARVELOUS PIETY

CONSIDERATION.— “And they were persevering in the doctrine of the Apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” (Acts 2:42.) Before their conversion these very disciples had been worldly-minded men, whose whole religion consisted in certain external observances, without interior devotion: as our Blessed Lord had once complained, “This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.” (St. Matt. 15:8.) But now these same men have become interior, spiritual, contemplative — full of the most tender piety. This was the third miraculous operation of the Holy Ghost in their hearts. How did they preserve and increase this gift? By persevering in the doctrine of the Apostles, in prayer and Communion.

COLLOQUY with the Holy Ghost.

WONDERFUL CHANGES

IN HUMAN SOCIETY EFFECTED BY THE HOLY GHOST

1st Prel. Consider the words of David: "Thou shalt send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created; and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth." (Psalm 103:30.)

2d Prel. Ask for a large outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

POINT I

BENEVOLENT INSTITUTIONS

CONSIDERATION.—What was the state of society before the coming of the Holy Ghost? Idolatry and superstition, tyranny and oppression, reigned everywhere; the most revolting vices were even worshiped! The breath of the Holy Spirit swept away these abominations, and substituted for them the reign of truth, justice, and virtue. What was the condition of the poor and the unfortunate? They were treated with neglect and contempt, as the objects of the malediction of the gods. Even among the most civilized pagans there was no attempt at any asylum or refuge for the destitute and suffering. They had not the spirit of charity. This could only come from God. It was shed abroad with the greatest profusion by the Holy Ghost, as St. Paul says, in his Epistle to the Romans: "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us." (Romans 5:5.) This Divine charity began without delay to "renew the face of the earth," covering it with hospitals and charitable institutions of all kinds for the sick, the destitute, for old age, for children, raising up benevolent societies and religious communities of men and women devoted to the service of others, even at the cost of their lives. The martyrs of charity everywhere accompanied the martyrs of the faith.

APPLICATION.— How blessed are those who, following in the footsteps of the Apostles, carry the Gospel into heathen lands! And not less blessed they who, for love of God and by the duties of their institute, devote themselves to the service of the poor and ignorant. Are they not almost canonized already by the sentences of Jesus Christ: "Come, ye blessed of My Father: . . . for I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat. . . . Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to Me"? (St. Matt. 25: 34, 35, 40.) We who have left all to devote ourselves to the service of the sick and needy are among this happy number if we are faithful to our obligations.

AFFECTIONS.— Thanksgiving to the Holy Ghost for the inestimable blessing of Christian civilization, and for our share of the happiness resulting from it.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will devote myself with good-will to those works of charity and zeal which are least apparent to the world, and most repulsive to nature.

POINT II

ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

CONSIDERATION.— Before the coming of the Holy Ghost and the preaching of the Gospel, more than half the human race was oppressed under the yoke of the most cruel slavery. In pagan Rome, the centre of civilization, a single individual often possessed many thousands of slaves. And, in the eyes of their masters, these slaves were looked upon as no better than mere beasts of burden; they were put to death for a mere whim or caprice, compelled to destroy each other in the amphitheatres for the amusement of the people, sacrificed on the altars of their false gods, or rather, of devils. Reason had in vain lifted up her voice

against these horrors by the mouth of some philosophers. It was reserved for the Holy Ghost to abolish them by the mouth of the Apostles, and to proclaim to the world that "Non est personarum acceptio apud Deum." "There is no respect of persons with God," (Col. 3:25,) and that with Him "non est servus, neque liber, sed omnia et in omnibus Christus," there is neither "bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all." (Col. 3:11.) These fundamental principles, constantly insisted upon by the holy Pontiffs, successors of the Apostles, at length prevailed, and succeeded in civilizing the world.

APPLICATION.—How great is the blindness and ignorance of those who attribute the blessings of civilization not to the Divine Author of all good, but to merely natural causes! They do not, or will not, see that these natural causes, this progress of the mere human spirit, have produced no such results in lands where the Gospel is still unknown. Let us pray for these who are still in the darkness and misery of error, and oppressed by cruel tyranny, and earnestly endeavor to break off from ourselves the yoke of human respect and unruly passions.

COLLOQUY with the Holy Ghost. Recognize and bless Him, as the Author of all the blessings of Christian civilization. Ask pardon for having hitherto enjoyed these blessings without having sufficiently expressed your gratitude. Beg of Him to increase in you the spirit of charity, zeal, and self-sacrifice.

FEAST OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

1st Prel. Listen to Jesus Christ saying, "Teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (St. Matt. 28: 19.)

2d Prel. Ask the grace to know and to feel interiorly all the love and gratitude you owe to each one of the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity.

POINT I

LOVE AND BENEFITS OF GOD THE FATHER

CONSIDERATION.—The mystery of the Holy Trinity is the greatest of all mysteries. The feast which the Church has appointed to be celebrated on this day in its honor, is as it were the complement and gathering up into one, of all the feasts of the ecclesiastical year. It is a mystery impenetrable to our intelligence essentially limited, and as such incapable of comprehending the infinite; but we must adore it with the deepest humility, the most tender love, and the most lively gratitude, for it is the source of all good to us. In order to excite these sentiments, let us call to mind all that we owe to the love of the Three Persons of the most Holy Trinity. "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth." Omnipotence, and the work of creation, which implies omnipotence, is specially attributed to the Father, because He is the first principle from which the two other Persons proceed. To Him, then, I owe my existence, my preservation, and all that has conduced to my preservation; without Him I should be nothing, and should always have remained nothing.

APPLICATION.—God saw from all eternity, in the nothingness out of which you were created, millions of possible beings, who would have served Him better than you have done, and glorified Him more; why,

then, has He created you rather than them? Out of a gratuitous love of predilection: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." (Jer. 31 : 3.) To this love you owe it that you have been preserved from so many dangers in which others have perished, and that you enjoy so many peculiar favors both of nature and grace. Love demands love in return. What return have you made to so loving and generous a God and Father? Perhaps you have loved Him but little, and served Him grudgingly.

AFFECTIONS.—Adoration, humility, gratitude, oblation of yourself, earnest protestations of love and devotion.

RESOLUTIONS.—To maintain yourself in these dispositions during the day.

POINT II

LOVE AND BENEFITS OF GOD THE SON

CONSIDERATION.—The love of God the Son for us has been manifested in a still more striking manner than by the benefit of creation, namely, by that of *redemption*, which has not only ransomed us from slavery and death, but reinstated us in all our primitive rights. What would be thought in the world if the son of a king should take the place of a criminal, and offer his life for him?

APPLICATION.—This is what the Son of God has done for each one of us. He debased Himself, says the Apostle, "*formam servi accipiens, . . . factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis,*" "taking the form of a servant, . . . becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Philip. 2 : 7, 8.) From which the Apostle concludes that we ought henceforth to live only for Him who died for us: "*Qui vivunt jam non sibi vivant, sed ei qui pro ipsis*

mortuus est." "That they also who live may not now live to themselves, but unto Him who died for them." (II. Cor. 5:15.) Have we given this proof of our love and gratitude to Him?

AFFECTIONS and RESOLUTIONS as in the preceding Point.

POINT III

LOVE AND BENEFITS OF THE HOLY GHOST

CONSIDERATION.— The love of the Holy Ghost manifests itself especially in our sanctification and adoption. He sanctified us in our Baptism, purifying our soul from all stain, filling it with Divine charity, and all those prerogatives of sanctifying grace which raise us to the dignity of adopted sons and heirs of God, and co-heirs of Jesus Christ. In the words of St. Paul, "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us." (Romans 5:5.) "For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God: and if sons, heirs also, heirs indeed of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." (Romans 8:16, 17.) He has also sanctified us in our Confirmation, and in our partaking of the other Sacraments; and still further by the attractions of His grace leading us to the perfection of our state or to the religious life.

APPLICATION.— How many benefits have I received without any merit on my part, and even in spite of my great unworthiness! "What shall I render to the Lord," to the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, "for all the things that He has rendered to me?" (Psalm 115:3.)

COLLOQUY with the Three Adorable Persons of the Holy Trinity. Adore them, and thank them specially for the blessings we have received.

RELATIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN

WITH THE HOLY TRINITY

1st Prel. Imagine you see one making the sign of the Cross with piety.

2d Prel. Ask grace to understand rightly our relations with the Three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity.

POINT I

OUR RELATIONS WITH GOD THE FATHER

CONSIDERATION.—What is a Christian? A man who has a special relationship to God the Father, whose child he became in holy Baptism. What Jesus Christ is by *nature*, the Christian is by *adoption*. He receives by spiritual regeneration, according to his capacity, what the Word received in His eternal generation. “You have received,” says St. Paul, “the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” (Romans 8: 15.) What an honor would be conferred on the son of a poor man if he were adopted by some powerful monarch, and invested with all the privileges of a legitimate son! Yet this is but a faint image of our adoption by God in holy Baptism.

APPLICATION.—What are our obligations toward so generous and loving a Father? Surely to love Him with all our hearts, and to prove our love: 1st, by avoiding all that could displease Him, even the most trivial faults or transgressions of our rule; 2d, by trying to please Him more and more by the practice of virtue; 3d, by striving diligently after the perfection of our state, according to the words of Jesus Christ, “Be ye therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect.” (St. Matt. 5: 48.)

AFFECTIONS.—Let us, in presence of our Heavenly

Father, lament our coldness, or at least the imperfect love we show Him.

RESOLUTIONS.— To endeavor earnestly to multiply the proofs of love claimed from us by our Heavenly Father.

POINT II

OUR RELATIONS WITH GOD THE SON

CONSIDERATION.— What is a Christian? A man who has a special relationship, or rather many special relationships, with God the Incarnate Son. He is His brother by his very nature; and by baptism he is a member of His mystical body. "*Vos autem estis corpus Christi et membra de membro.*" "Now you are the body of Christ," says St. Paul, "and members of member." (1. Cor. 12: 27.) But this is not all. In Holy Communion we become incorporated with Him, according to His own words, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him." (St. John 6: 57.) Living with His life, identified as it were with Him, we are, says St. Peter, "made partakers of the Divine nature." (II. St. Peter 1: 4.) What can be more blessed and glorious!

APPLICATION.— What ought to be our return for these great privileges? St. John will tell us, in few but memorable words: "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also to walk even as He walked." (St. John 2: 6.) In this manner we shall put in practice that beautiful expression of St. Cyprian, "*Christianus alter Christus.*" "The Christian is another Christ."

AFFECTIONS.— I will pray for grace to discern the truth of these words, "The Christian is another Christ," and to understand the obligations implied by them, especially with regard to religious.

RESOLUTIONS.— Excite yourself to generosity in the service of God, considering the efforts and sacrifices made by so many faithful souls in the world.

POINT III

OUR RELATIONS WITH GOD THE HOLY GHOST

CONSIDERATION.— What is a Christian? A man who enters through baptism into special relations with the Holy Spirit, whose *living temple* he becomes; a truth which the great Apostle constantly refers to; “An nescitis quoniam membra vestra templum sunt Spiritus Sancti, qui in vobis est.” “Know you not,” he writes to the Corinthians, “that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you?” (1. Cor. 6: 19.) And it is worthy of remark that the ceremonies used in baptism are the same as those for the consecration of churches.

APPLICATION.— The Apostle himself draws the practical conclusion from this great truth; for after saying, “Your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost,” he immediately adds, “Glorificate et portate Deum in corpore vestro.” “Glorify and bear God in your body.” (1. Cor. 6: 20.) That is, make your body an instrument for the glory of God; keep it free from all stain, adorn it with virtue and good works, as a sanctuary is kept and adorned.

COLLOQUY with the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

REMINDS US OF THE HOLY TRINITY

1st Prel. The same as in the preceding meditation.

2d Prel. Ask grace to honor the Holy Trinity as much as possible in making the sign of the Cross.

POINT I

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER

CONSIDERATION.—When you say these words in making the sign of the Cross, add, at least mentally, *Who created me in His image, and for heaven.* These words are a meditation in themselves: *Who created me*, out of nothing, by His almighty power, and still more by His love of predilection instead of so many others who would have served Him better. *In His image*: how beautiful and precious, then, must my soul be in the sight of the angels! It is the living portrait of God, and reminds us always and everywhere that we are “all the children of the Most High.” And *for heaven*: to be happy there forever, body and soul, full of glory and joy unspeakable.

APPLICATION.—Such are a few of the thoughts which may occupy your mind when, in making the sign of the Cross, you add the words, *Who created me in His image for heaven.* And these thoughts will excite suitable affections.

AFFECTIONS.—*Our Father who art in heaven*, may Thy name be hallowed in my heart and mind by ever-increasing respect and filial love.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will endeavor to observe the pious practice indicated in the CONSIDERATION of this first Point.

POINT II

AND OF THE SON

CONSIDERATION.— Add to these words in like manner, *Who has redeemed me by His blood, with so much love.* Redeemed from the slavery of the devil, from the eternal damnation to which sin had subjected me, and from which none but the Son of God could deliver me. *Who has redeemed me,* not with silver or gold, but with *His blood, with every drop of His blood.* *And with so much love:* the purest and most disinterested love possible, since He had nothing to gain by loving me, being Himself the Infinite God.

APPLICATION.— You will have no difficulty in drawing practical conclusions from these thoughts. Being redeemed by the Son of God, you belong no longer to yourselves, but to Him. You must therefore live for Him, and glorify Him by the holiness of your life, and also by the ardor of your zeal for other souls redeemed by Him; and you must have an unbounded confidence that, having given Himself for you, He will refuse you nothing.

AFFECTIONS.— Beg of God that these thoughts and practical conclusions may be habitually present to your heart and mind, when you make the sign of the Cross.

RESOLUTIONS.— To make efforts, during a fixed time, to attain this end.

POINT III

AND OF THE HOLY GHOST

CONSIDERATION.— Add again to these words, *Who has sanctified me, and adopted me as the child of God. Sanctified* by His mysterious operations in the Holy Sacraments, particularly in Baptism and Confirmation. *Sanctified* by His Divine inspirations and graces, especially by the grace of my holy vocation. *And adopted as the child of God:* adopted in the fullest sense of the words, and with all the privileges of a true adoption.

APPLICATION.— These thoughts will remind us of the solemn obligations of our Baptism, our Confirmation, our vocation; they will make us docile and obedient to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, and true children of God.

We may thus derive great benefit from this method of making the sign of the Cross: In the name of the Father, who has created me in His image, and for heaven; and of the Son, who has redeemed me with His blood, and with so much love; and of the Holy Ghost, who has sanctified me, and adopted me as the child of God, I desire to begin and end this day, this action, etc.

COLLOQUY with the Blessed Trinity. Offer to God your resolutions, with the desire of becoming daily more pleasing to Him.

NOVENA TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

- 1st Prel.* Consider Jesus Christ showing His heart, and saying,
Behold this heart, which has loved men so much.
2d Prel. Ask for grace to begin this Novena well.

POINT I

OBJECT OF THIS DEVOTION

CONSIDERATION.—The *material* or *sensible* object of this devotion is the Heart of the Incarnate Word, inseparably united to His Humanity and His Divinity, and as much an object of worship as Jesus Christ Himself, with whom it is identified. The *spiritual* or *abstract* object is the love of Jesus Christ, of which His Heart is the symbol. In whatever way, therefore, we consider it, the *object* of this devotion is all that we can imagine most worthy of our adoration. It is the Heart of a God who loves us tenderly; it is Jesus Christ Himself, represented by the most noble organ of His Humanity, and the most beautiful attribute of His Divinity — His love.

APPLICATION.—We think ourselves happy if we possess, or even if we only press with our lips, a relic of the true Cross, one of the nails, one of the thorns; which pierced the hands and head of Jesus. But what are these, deserving as they are of our veneration, compared with the heart of Jesus? Oh! may our devotion during this Novena be worthy of its great and most sacred object! May it increase a thousand-fold our love and devotion to the Sacred Heart!

AFFECTIONS.—O Amiable and Adorable Heart of Jesus! grant that I may love Thee ever more and more. (Prayer of the Confraternity.)

RESOLUTIONS.—To repeat this aspiration several times on every day of the Novena. Sometimes to kiss the image of the Sacred Heart. To prevent forgetfulness, we should place this Image before us.

POINT II

MOTIVES OF DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART

CONSIDERATION.—*Motives on the side of Jesus Christ.*—No devotion can be more acceptable to Him, because none can more powerfully remind us of all that He has done and suffered for us. His heart has the same feelings as our own. We are pleased when those to whom we have rendered some service are grateful to us. He shares this feeling, as His own words plainly show. On the eve of His death, when He gave power to His Apostles to consecrate bread and wine, He said twice to them, “This do ye for the commemoration of Me;” adding, “For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord until He come.” (1. Cor. 11: 25, 26.) You shall show forth or recall to men that death which I endured for love of them, and to save them from eternal damnation.

Motives drawn from the consideration of Jesus Christ present on our altars.—By this devotion we may make reparation for the insults and blasphemies of heretics, and the coldness and indifference of Catholics, which wound His Sacred Heart.

Motives on our own side.—We shall find this devotion a most efficacious means, 1st, to nourish the interior life; 2d, to pay the debt of gratitude which we owe to our Divine Redeemer; 3d, to preserve and increase our fervor; and 4th, to obtain for ourselves and for others an abundant share of the graces which flow unceasingly from this Sacred Heart.

APPLICATION.—What numerous and excellent mo-

tives for cultivating this devotion, and promoting it amongst others! And have we not been slack and remiss in doing it? To renew our fervor, let us call to mind the words which our Blessed Lord Himself addressed to Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque, "Behold this heart, which has loved men so much, and which is loved by them so little!" And those other words, "I promise that my heart shall expand, and shed its love abundantly on all who shall honor it, or cause it to be honored." (*Life of Blessed Margaret Mary.*)

AFFECTIONS.— I will beg of my Beloved Saviour to inflame my heart with His love.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will earnestly strive to propagate the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

POINT III

NOVENA, OR PRACTICAL DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART

CONSIDERATION.— The better we prepare ourselves for great feasts, the more graces we may expect to receive; for God demands our co-operation. Moreover, this preparation strengthens our faith and confidence, which are the first conditions required by our Lord for the working of any miracle. This is the origin of Novenas, and especially of the Novena of the Sacred Heart.

APPLICATION.— To insure its success, determine now what you will do each day; what prayers you will use, what visits to the Blessed Sacrament, what mortifications.

COLLOQUY with the loving Heart of Jesus.

CORPUS CHRISTI

THE LOVE OF THE HEART OF JESUS

MANIFESTED IN THE INSTITUTION OF THE HOLY EUCARIST

1st Prel. Listen to St. John the Evangelist saying, Jesus "having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end." (St. John 13:1.)

2d Prel. Ask for grace to understand the miracles of love which the heart of Jesus works in the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist.

POINT I

JESUS AS THE COMPANION OF OUR EXILE IN THE HOLY EUCARIST

CONSIDERATION.— The love of the Heart of Jesus has found means to perform a prodigy impossible to human love — *to die for the beloved object, yet without being separated from it.* This He did by the institution of the Holy Eucharist. By means of this ineffable Sacrament, Jesus Christ dwells really in our hearts, and in the midst of us, though veiled from our eyes. Making Himself thus the *companion of our exile*, He multiplies His presence all over the world, that no one may be deprived of it; and from the interior of the tabernacle He calls to us as from an abyss of mercy, "Come to me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you." (St. Matt. 11:28.)

APPLICATION.— Let us take advantage of the great festival of to-day, the solemnity of Corpus Christi, to offer to the heart of Jesus our tribute of love, gratitude, and veneration; to make reparation for having so frequently disregarded His loving invitations, so seldom visited Him in the Sacrament of His love, so often

grieved His Sacred Heart by our coldness and infidelity, though we actually live under the same roof with Him.

AFFECTIONS.— Endeavor to maintain yourself for some time in these pious dispositions.

RESOLUTIONS.— To visit Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of His love more frequently, or at least with greater fervor.

POINT II

JESUS IN THE HOLY EUCHARIST AS A VICTIM PERPETUALLY OFFERED FOR US

CONSIDERATION.— The second marvel which the love of our Divine Saviour works for us by means of the Holy Eucharist is, that He renews continually in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass the offering which He made on Calvary on Good-Friday. He is here also both priest and victim, offering Himself by the hands of His minister. The only difference between the Sacrifice of the Cross and that on our altars is, that the first was a bloody sacrifice, while the other is unbloody; Jesus being therein slain, according to the language of theology, *only by the sword of the words of consecration*, by virtue of which words His body is separated from His blood, and would really be separated, were not Jesus, in His glorious state, immortal. From this we conclude, with St. John Chrysostom, “that the Sacrifice of the Mass is of equal value with that of the Cross.” “*Tantum valet missæ sacrificium quantum mors Christi in cruce.*”

APPLICATION.— What a blessing and happiness to be able duly to participate in this Holy Sacrifice; if not as a priest, yet as a server or assistant! But how do we assist thereat? With faith, reverence, devotion, or with coldness, and out of mere custom, neglecting the acts of devotion, we were once in the habit of making?

AFFECTIONS.— On this day, when we commemorate the institution of the Holy Sacrifice of our altars, let us admire and glorify with holy transports the love therein displayed by the Heart of Jesus.

RESOLUTIONS.— Observe, in order to assist your devotion during Mass, those pious practices suggested by early fervor during the time of novitiate, which you have perhaps neglected or completely forgotten since then.

POINT III

JESUS THE FOOD OF OUR SOULS IN THE HOLY EUCHARIST

CONSIDERATION.— The love of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist is shown most of all by His vouchsafing to become therein the food of our souls, and so identifying Himself with us, that “we live in Him and He in us.” Listen to His own words: “Accipite et manducate; hoc est corpus meum.” “Take ye, and eat; this is my body.” (I. Cor. II: 24.) “Qui manducat meam carnem, et bibit meum sanguinem, in me manet, et ego in illo.” “He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him.” (St. John 6: 56.)

APPLICATION.— How is it that after so many Communions we are still so imperfect, so *unspiritual*, so *unlike Jesus Christ*? It must be for want of the right dispositions; for want of fervor in our preparation, or thanksgiving, or even in the very reception of the Blessed Sacrament.

COLLOQUY with the Blessed Margaret Mary. Ask her to obtain for you some sparks of the divine love which animated her when our Lord appeared to her, showed her His heart, and addressed her.

PURITY OF THE HEART OF JESUS

1st Prel. Listen to Jesus saying these words: "Blessed are the clean of heart." (St. Matt. 5:8.)

2d Prel. Ask the grace to keep your heart pure from the corruption of the world.

POINT I

THE HEART OF JESUS IS PURE FROM ALL STAIN OF SIN

CONSIDERATION.—The Heart of Jesus, formed out of the blood of an Immaculate Virgin, was itself immaculate, and always free from the smallest taint of sin. Our Blessed Lord even condescended to offer a proof of this to His calumniators, when, after having said that "come forth from the heart" (St. Matt. 15:18) all manner of sins, He demanded of them, "Which of you shall convince Me of sin?" (St. John 8:46.) They did, indeed, attempt to do so on the day of His Passion, but with so little success that Pilate was compelled to proclaim publicly, "I find no cause in Him." (St. John 18:38.) He was also incapable of sin by virtue of the hypostatic union of the Humanity with the Divinity. It was impossible that the breath of sin should ever for a moment sully the perfect purity of that most Adorable Heart.

APPLICATION.—How different, also, are our hearts from that of Jesus! His is pure and immaculate; ours stained from the very beginning with the guilt of original sin, and still more deeply stained afterward by that of so many actual sins; sins of youth, sins of each succeeding day, which, though they may seem little in our eyes, are, in the just judgment of God, stains only to be effaced by voluntary penance in the flames of Purgatory.

AFFECTIONS.—"Create a clean heart within me, O Lord!" (Psalm 50:12.) "Who can make him clean,

that is conceived of unclean seed? Is it not Thou who only art?" (Job 14: 4.)

RESOLUTIONS.— To watch carefully over the affections of your heart, and promptly and energetically to check its irregular emotions.

POINT II

THE HEART OF JESUS IS EXEMPT FROM ALL TEMPTATION TO SIN

CONSIDERATION.— The Apostle St. Paul, though confirmed in grace, declared that day and night his soul was troubled by temptations and continual excitements to sin. He groans bitterly over this misery. But our Blessed Lord experienced nothing of this kind. He did, indeed, permit the devil to tempt Him, but those temptations were purely exterior; they could never reach His heart, or trouble its perfect peace and serenity, which are among its greatest perfections.

APPLICATION.— Whatever care we may take to repress the irregular motions of sin, we can never be wholly free from them in this world. The evil inclinations implanted by the sin of our first parents will always be a source of trial and temptation to us. It is only by a constant struggle that we can keep them in subjection. We are thus constrained to live always at war with ourselves, or, as the Apostle expresses it, with "the law of sin, that is in our members." But let us take courage; the fiercer the struggle, the more glorious will be the victory, and the brighter our crown in heaven. Moreover, the Heart of Jesus is always open to us as a sure refuge and resting-place.

AFFECTIONS.— Grant me, O Lord! peace of heart, and the grace to conquer my passions.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will never allow myself to give

way to discouragement; but I will take refuge, in time of danger, in the Heart of Jesus.

POINT III

THE HEART OF JESUS IS EXEMPT FROM EVEN THE THOUGHT OF SIN

CONSIDERATION.— If we may say of the Mother of Jesus that never, by virtue of her Immaculate Conception, did so much as an evil thought disturb the peace of her heart, much more may we say this of her Divine Son. Jesus Christ was, moreover, absolute master over all the movements of His Heart. He could open or close it at will to the emotions of joy, grief, etc.

APPLICATION.— It is very different, alas! with us. We are troubled with bad thoughts, even in spite of ourselves. They follow and persecute us everywhere, and at all times, even in our prayers, even before the altar. We have still the seeds of original sin in our hearts. "*Sensus enim et cogitatio humani cordis in malum prona sunt ab adolescentia sua.*" "The imagination and thought of man's heart are prone to evil from their youth." (Gen. 8:21.) We are often tempted to complain of this, but do we not often increase the evil by allowing too much liberty to our senses, especially to our eyes, which the Holy Ghost calls the windows of the soul? "*Ascendit mors per fenestras nostras.*" "Death is come up through our windows." (Jer. 9:21.)

COLLOQUY with your Guardian Angel. Ask him to obtain for you grace to be like him, ever recollected and united to God, and like him to remain pure in the midst of the wickedness, the dissipation, and the turmoil of the world.

HUMILITY OF THE HEART OF JESUS

1st Prel. Behold Jesus showing you His Heart, and saying, "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart." (St. Matt. 9: 29.)

2d Prel. Ask for grace to grow in the esteem and practice of humility.

POINT I

HUMILITY OF THE HEART OF JESUS

CONSIDERATION.— *Humility of heart or of will*, as distinct from *humility of mind* or of *intellect*, is a virtue, or habitual disposition and state of the will, by which a man forgets himself, and seeks only the glory of God in all things. Dead to himself, the humble man lives only for God; God alone is the object of his thoughts, of his intentions; the only motive and end of all that he does, desires, fears, or hopes, because to God alone all glory and honor are due. Such was our Blessed Lord during the whole of His mortal life, as His own words testify, "I seek not My own glory." (St. John 8: 50.) Witness also the whole course of His life, which St. Paul sums up briefly in the words, "Semetipsum exinanivit." "He humbled Himself." (Philip. 2: 8.)

APPLICATION.— Do we find a like humility in ourselves? Do we seek always the glory of God alone, or have we not in the secret depth of our hearts some self-love, or desire for the esteem of men, even in our holiest actions? If so, we have not yet learnt to copy the humility of our Divine Master.

AFFECTIONS.— An ardent desire to assimilate your heart to the Heart of Jesus. Divine Saviour, teach me to become "humble of heart."

RESOLUTIONS.— I will this day exercise special vigilance over the motives which influence my conduct.

POINT II

THE HUMILITY OF THE HEART OF JESUS SHOWN BY HIS WORDS

CONSIDERATION.— True humility, though deeply hidden in the heart, will manifest itself in words; for our Blessed Lord says, “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” (St. Matt. 12:34.) And thus it showed itself with Him in His intercourse with men. Did He ever seek to exalt Himself? No; “Gloria mea nihil est.” “My glory is nothing,” He said. (St. John 8:54.) He spoke always of His Father’s glory, and this in terms of such magnificence and under such attractive figures, that the Apostles, filled with wonder, said to Him at the Last Supper, “Domine, ostende nobis Patrem et sufficit nobis.” “Lord, shew us the Father, and it is enough for us.” (St. John 14:8.)

APPLICATION.— Let us here examine ourselves, and consider whether those with whom we are intimate have reason to think that our hearts are full of the thought of God, and that we desire above all things to promote His glory. Do we not rather speak often of ourselves, and that even in our own praise, vaunting our good works, past or present, our qualities or talents? Do we not often blame others, defend our own opinions obstinately, answer those who may contradict us with bitterness? If so, can we flatter ourselves that we are really *humble of heart*? Let others answer this question for us: they will say, “Loquela tua manifestum te facit.” “Even thy speech doth discover thee,” (St. Matt. 26:73;) for it is full of thyself.

AFFECTIIONS.— Humble yourself profoundly before God, considering how deficient you are yet in the virtue of true humility. Pray for a contrite and humble heart.

RESOLUTIONS.— Never without necessity to speak of yourself, either good or evil. This is the rule laid down by Saint Francis of Sales.

POINT III

HUMILITY OF THE HEART OF JESUS MANIFESTED IN HIS ACTS

CONSIDERATION.— The whole life of our Blessed Lord upon earth was only a series of humiliations. He endured them voluntarily to make reparation for the insulted Majesty of His Father, to pay the debt of our pride, and to set us an example of humility. He was born in a stable; He lived for thirty years unknown to the world; and during the three years of His public ministry He allowed envy and calumny to accuse Him of being a seducer, an impostor, and possessed by the devil. He died as a malefactor between two thieves. Could he have done more to abase and annihilate Himself?

APPLICATION.— We, too, should act thus, if we were truly *humble of heart*. Instead of seeking after praises, honors, and marks of esteem, we should seek to be hidden from men, that we may please God alone; to shut ourselves out from the world, that our hearts may be free for God only; and at least we should not be troubled or disturbed if we are spoken against, reproved, or humbled.

COLLOQUY with Jesus, humble of heart and enduring deep humiliation.

OBEDIENCE OF THE HEART OF JESUS

1st Prel. Behold Jesus Christ showing you His Heart, and saying, "I have given you an example," (of obedience,) "that as I have done to you, so you do also." (St. John 13: 15.)
2d Prel. Ask for grace to copy faithfully your Divine Model.

POINT I

SUBMISSION OF THE HEART OF JESUS TO HIS FATHER

CONSIDERATION.—Obedience is the first-fruit of humility. Jesus is *humble of heart*; therefore He is docile and obedient of heart. He tells us that He makes the will of His Heavenly Father His own. "Pater, non mea voluntas, sed tua, fiat." "Father, not My will, but Thine be done." (St. Luke 22: 42.) And that He submits and conforms Himself to it in everything: "I do always the things that please Him." And this even in things most repugnant to nature; witness His agony in the Garden of Gethsemani. His obedience was perfect, because the foundation on which it rested was perfect; He did the will of His Father, because it was the will of His Father: "Yea, Father, for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight."

APPLICATION.—What an excellent example is here proposed for our imitation! Have we followed it by trying to make the will of God our own? By accepting all the various circumstances of our life, whether agreeable to us or not, with *an entire submission of heart* to the will of God, without whose permission nothing can befall us in this world? Have we obeyed Him always in a spirit of faith and love? "Ita Pater: quoniam sic fuit placitum ante te." (St. Matt. 11: 26.)

AFFECTIONS—Grant me, Lord Jesus, the grace to

understand and faithfully imitate the submission and obedience of Thy Sacred Heart.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will, during this day, perform all my actions, whether trivial or important, in the spirit of obedience.

POINT II

SUBMISSION OF THE HEART OF JESUS TO MARY AND JOSEPH

CONSIDERATION.— “Erat subditus illis.” “And He was subject to them.” (St. Luke 2: 51.) These three words contain the whole life of Jesus Christ during the thirty years that He spent in retreat with Mary His Mother, and Joseph His foster-father. But what is this? A God subject to two creatures? Is there not something in this inconsistent with the sovereign dominion of the Divinity over all creation? No; because the obedience of Jesus is really given to God His Father, who is represented to Him by Mary and Joseph.

APPLICATION.— This is the true model of obedience, the obedience of faith; submission to God in the persons of those who represent Him to us, and of whom He has said, “He that heareth you heareth Me.” (St. Luke 10: 16.) This is the obedience of the perfect religious, which, far from degrading, exalts and ennobles him. To obey thus, is to have the same will with God. Is it in this spirit that we obey our lawful superiors, without having regard to their personal qualifications? If so, our obedience will be perfect, like that of our Divine Master, as far as is possible for us; it will be prompt, generous, unlimited, and full of merit before God.

AFFECTIONS.— Esteem and love of the obedience which proceeds from faith. Desire to excel in the practice of this great virtue.

RESOLUTIONS.—Take care that your obedience be not based upon merely human motives, that your submission do not proceed from fear or self-interest.

POINT III

ADMIRABLE SUBMISSION OF THE HEART OF JESUS TO ALL KINDS OF PERSONS

CONSIDERATION.—On the same principle which we have been considering, Jesus obeyed and submitted to even the most wicked men, and those whose hypocrisy He had proclaimed to the people. Caiphas, in his office of high-priest, adjured Him to say if He were the Son of God or not, and immediately Jesus breaks the silence He had hitherto observed, and answers him fully. He submitted even to the heathen: Pontius Pilate, as governor of Judea, condemned Him to death, and He accepted the sentence without a word of reply. He even obeyed His executioners: when they ordered Him to stretch out His arms on the cross, He immediately did it, with perfect submission of heart and will. Thus He became, as the Apostle says, “obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross.” (Philip. 2: 8.) It was for love for us, and also for our instruction and encouragement, that Jesus gave us these examples of obedience. Bear them in mind, and you will never complain of having harsh superiors, or commands too difficult to obey. With Jesus on the cross before our eyes, no act of obedience will seem too hard for us.

COLLOQUY with any Saint of our order remarkable for obedience of heart and spirit; or else with our Beloved Saviour, thanking Him for the example and encouragement He has given us, and asking pardon for the many reservations and imperfections which generally accompany our obedience.

MEEKNESS OF THE HEART OF JESUS

1st Prel. Behold Jesus Christ showing us His Heart, and saying
 "Learn of Me, because I am meek." (St. Matt. 11: 29.)

2d Prel. Ask for grace to understand, esteem, and love meekness

POINT I

MEEKNESS OF THE HEART OF JESUS MANIFESTED IN
HIS WHOLE PERSON

CONSIDERATION.—Of all qualities, meekness is the most universally loved and appreciated. A gentle, kind-hearted man is no sooner known than loved. Every one feels drawn to him, and desires his friendship. What a marvelous attraction, then, must the sweet Heart of Jesus have for men! We read in the holy Gospels that as many as four thousand followed Him once for three days without having any food, so great was the charm which His gentleness and meekness shed around Him.

APPLICATION.—Do we desire to know if our meekness at all resembles that of our Divine Master? Let us judge it by its fruits. Have we the sympathy and confidence of our brethren? do they seek our company gladly, especially in times of trouble, or do they keep aloof from us, from fear of being annoyed and contradicted?

AFFECTIONS.—O most meek Heart of Jesus! teach me to be meek and humble of heart, after Thy example.

RESOLUTIONS.—To combat vigorously any inclination to hardness of heart or obstinacy of temper of which we may be conscious.

POINT II

THE MEEKNESS OF HIS WORDS

CONSIDERATION.— Every page of the holy Gospels bears witness to this. What could be more sweet than these words? "I am the good Shepherd. The good Shepherd giveth His life for His sheep." (St. John 10: 11.) Or again, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem! . . . how often would I have gathered thy children as the bird doth her brood under her wings; and thou wouldst not." (St. Luke 13: 34.) And again, the words He addressed to the traitor Judas in the very act of consummating his crime: "Friend, whereto art thou come? . . . Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" (St. Matt. 26: 50; St. Luke 22: 48.) What meekness, above all, in the prayer which He made on the cross for His executioners: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (St. Luke 23: 34.)

APPLICATION.— If it be true that from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks, must we not conclude that our hearts are still far from being like that of our Divine Saviour? We are so harsh in our judgments of others; so ready to exaggerate their faults, to reprove them, to publish them. Jesus answers with such meekness when unjustly accused, and we break out into sharp words when told of our real faults. Jesus finds an excuse for His executioners, and we are angry if we only imagine that some one desires to do us an injury.

AFFECTIONS.— Acknowledge and regret that you have derived so little profit from the instructions of your Divine Master, who continually repeats to us, "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart."

RESOLUTIONS.— I will devote particular attention, during this day, to my words, and to the affections of my heart.

POINT III

THE MEEKNESS OF HIS ACTIONS

CONSIDERATION.— How severely was the meekness of Jesus tried! During the whole course of His life He was exposed to the hatred, calumnies, and insults of the doctors and rulers of the Jews. They even told Him to His face, before all the people, that He was possessed with a devil, and worked miracles by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. And yet His meekness never failed; it remained unchanged to the very last. He may indeed justly say to us, “Learn of Me; for I am meek and humble of heart.”

APPLICATION.— It is easy enough to be gentle and patient when all goes well with us, and every one is kind and considerate to us; there is no merit in it under such circumstances. But to be really “meek and humble of heart” is to be able to bear wrongs patiently, and to render good for evil, after the example of Jesus Christ. Let us strive earnestly to do this, that so the words of our Blessed Lord may be applied to us, “*Beati mites; quoniam ipsi possidebunt terram.*” “Blessed are the meek; for they shall possess the land.” (St. Matt. 5:4.)

COLLOQUY with Saint Francis of Sales, so remarkable for his constant meekness, meekness the more meritorious as he was naturally of a hasty and irritable temper

GENEROSITY OF THE HEART OF JESUS

1st Prel. Behold Jesus showing you His Heart, and saying, "Behold this Heart, which has loved men so much."

2d Prel. Ask for a heart wholly devoted to the interests of Jesus Christ.

POINT I

THE GENEROSITY OF THE HEART OF JESUS IS SHOWN BY THE SACRIFICE WHICH HE MADE OF HIS REPUTATION

CONSIDERATION.— We commonly measure the generosity of a man by the greatness of the sacrifices which he makes for his fellow-creatures. We may do the same with the generosity of the Heart of Jesus. What has He not sacrificed for us? May we not say that He only shared our goods in order that He might be able to sacrifice them for us? Of all that we possess, that which we guard most jealously, and with good reason, is our honor, our reputation; and this Jesus was content to sacrifice as a reparation for the dishonor which sin had done to His Heavenly Father, and to reconcile us to Him. He not only submitted silently to the most atrocious calumnies, but He died stripped of all reputation. As He hung on the cross, His enemies dared Him to come down if He were the Son of God: "Christus descendat nunc de cruce, ut videamus et credamus." "Let Christ come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe." (St. Mark 15: 32.) But He descended not, leaving them to conclude that He had not the power, that He was an impostor, the basest of men. And thus He died.

APPLICATION.— God will probably not require of us so entire a sacrifice of our reputation as He has demanded of certain great saints; amongst others, of St. John of the Cross, who was imprisoned, and died the victim of a calumny, without uttering one word

of complaint. But what our Lord does and will ask of us, is to sacrifice all feeling of resentment when, either through malice or inadvertence, some one may have injured our reputation; to receive in silence, as our rule commands, any reprimand or penance given for a fault which we have not committed. These little sacrifices, without being heroic, will be pleasing to God, and merit a reward.

AFFECTIONS.—Pray for a generous heart capable, if necessary, of making the sacrifices most painful to nature.

RESOLUTIONS.—To be indifferent to honor and reputation, except in so far as they regard the service of God and of our neighbor.

POINT II

IT IS SHOWN BY THE SACRIFICE WHICH HE MADE
OF ALL THE ENJOYMENTS OF LIFE

CONSIDERATION.—Jesus was innocence itself; He had no sins to expiate; He therefore had a full right to enjoy all the pleasures of this life. But, nevertheless, He made a generous sacrifice of them, passing His whole life subject to the most severe privations, and sufferings both of body and soul, such as no one had ever endured. And this because He had taken upon Himself to make satisfaction to the Divine Justice for all our criminal indulgences; and also that He might encourage us by His example to lead a life of penance.

APPLICATION.—We are guilty creatures; we have much to expiate. If we have not strength or courage for severe penances, let us at least practice some little ones in a spirit of sacrifice; let us mortify ourselves in something during the day, and suffer without complaining. This is surely little enough, and yet how seldom we do even this!

AFFECTIONS.—Praise, bless, and love the most generous Heart of Jesus.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will gladly profit of every opportunity of mortifying myself, and of making any sacrifice for the love of Jesus.

POINT III

HIS MEEKNESS MANIFESTED IN THE SACRIFICE OF HIS LIFE

CONSIDERATION.—The most generous sacrifice that one man can make for another is, according to our Blessed Lord's own words, the sacrifice of his life—to die to save another from death. This, then, is what Jesus has done for us, for each one of us. We can all say with the Apostle, "*Qui dilexit me et tradidit semetipsum pro me.*" "Who loved me, and delivered Himself for me." (Gal. 2: 20.)

APPLICATION.—Is this great proof of the love of Jesus always present to our minds? Does it excite us to gratitude? And does this gratitude show itself in works, in a readiness to make sacrifices? Do we not, on the contrary, suffer many opportunities of making them to be lost? Our hearts are indeed most unlike the adorable Heart of Jesus.

COLLOQUY.—Prostrate before the Heart of my Beloved Saviour, I will make an act of reparation, consecrating myself henceforth forever to His service.

ZEAL OF THE HEART OF JESUS

1st Prel. To hear Jesus Christ saying to us, "Pray ye, therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He send laborers into His harvest." (St. Luke 10: 2.)

2d Prel. To ask for a zeal conformable to the zeal of the Heart of Jesus.

POINT I

ARDENT ZEAL OF THE SACRED HEART

CONSIDERATION.— Zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls is nothing else but the love of God running over from our own hearts upon others, desiring to win them to God and to see them united with us in heaven. The measure of our love is therefore the measure of our zeal. What, therefore, must have been the zeal of that adorable Heart, which loved both God and man with an ineffable love! These few words may give us some faint idea of it: "I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled? and I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!" (St. Luke 12: 49, 50;) that is to say, until I have consummated the sacrifice I so ardently desire to make of my life.

APPLICATION.— To procure the glory of God and the salvation of souls, was always the most ardent desire of the Saints, because they were full of the love of God. We find proof of this in almost every psalm of the holy King David. "For the zeal of Thy house hath eaten me up," he says; "and the reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen upon me." (Psalm 68: 10.) "Mine eyes have set forth springs of water, because they have not kept Thy law." (Psalm 118: 136.) If we cherish the like sentiments in our hearts, we too shall find a thousand means of exercising our zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

AFFECTIONS.—“Father of mercies! and God of all comfort,” (II. Cor. 1:3,) obedient to the command of Thy Divine Son, “Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He send laborers into His harvest,” (St. Luke 10:2;) I pray, and I will continually pray to Thee in all humility, that Thou wouldst raise up many laborers for the Gospel, “mighty in words and deeds,” (Acts 7:22;) that “all peoples give praise to Thee.” (Psalm 66:4.)

RESOLUTIONS.—Often recite this prayer, and others similar, which zeal and fervor may suggest to you, particularly at the consecration during Mass.

POINT II

EXTENT OF THE ZEAL OF THE SACRED HEART

CONSIDERATION.—Great as was the zeal of our Divine Lord, He restricted its exercise to the inhabitants of Palestine, because such was His Father’s will, to which He was in all things perfectly conformed. But His Heart embraced the whole world; He prayed perpetually for its conversion during His hidden life, and during the three years of His public ministry He prepared His Apostles for this great work, promising to be Himself with them, “even to the consummation of the world.” (St. Matt. 28:20.)

APPLICATION.—After the example of our Divine Master, let us learn, 1st, to let our zeal be governed by obedience, even should this compel us to restrain it within the narrow bounds of a life apparently common and obscure; 2d, not to envy those who may be called to a more brilliant career in the exercise of their zeal, but rather to do all we can to help them; 3d, to let our zeal embrace the whole world, taking part in the good work everywhere, as much as lies in our power, by prayers and alms.

AFFECTIONS and RESOLUTIONS as in the preceding Point.

POINT III

TRIUMPH OF THE ZEAL OF THE SACRED HEART

CONSIDERATION.—“Et ego, si exaltatus fuero a terra, omnia traham ad me ipsum.” “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself.” (St. John 12:32.) This is the prophecy of the triumph of our Blessed Lord’s zeal. And what a triumph! Idolatry vanquished and made despicable; the name of God known and adored everywhere; the way of salvation opened freely to all men; more than eleven millions, in every condition of life, bearing witness for the faith by a cruel martyrdom! And is it not even now a triumph that so many persons, even of the weaker sex, draw from the Heart of Jesus a zeal which gives them courage to forsake all things and follow the evangelical counsels, or go into distant and barbarous lands as missionaries.

APPLICATION.—We have the happiness of being consecrated entirely to works of zeal by our holy vocation; but how little fruit do we reap from our labors, because our faith is so weak, our charity so cold! Let us seek both in the Heart of Jesus.

COLLOQUY with St. Francis Xavier or St. Teresa, who, although placed in different positions, were both remarkable for their zeal.

KINDNESS AND TENDERNESS

OF THE HEART OF JESUS

1st Prel. Think that you see Jesus showing you His Heart, full of goodness and tenderness for men.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to conform your heart to the Heart of Jesus.

POINT I

TENDERNESS OF THE HEART OF JESUS SHOWN BY HIS TEARS

CONSIDERATION.— Kindness or goodness of heart is a disposition which inclines a man to do good to his fellow-men, and to compassionate their misfortunes. “Goodness,” says St. Leo the Great, “is the nature of God.” How great, then, must be the goodness of the Heart of Jesus! In how many ways His tenderness showed itself! First, by *tears*. Even on the occasion of His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, He was moved to tears by the thought of the miseries which would so soon burst upon the devoted city. “Videns civitatem, flevit super illam.” “Seeing the city, He wept over it.” (St. Luke 19: 41.) And again, St. John tells us that He was deeply touched, and moved to tears by the death of Lazarus and the grief of Martha and Mary: “Et lacrymatus est Jesus.” “And Jesus wept.” (St. John 11: 35.)

APPLICATION.— How little do we know of this tenderness of heart! Even the sight of a crucifix, which reminds us of the Passion and death of Jesus, draws no tears from our eyes. The sight of so many sinners, who crucify Him afresh every day, has no power to move us. And the thought of so many souls who go down daily into hell costs us not a single sigh. We do not even weep over our own sins.

AFFECTIONS.—Heart of Jesus! Ocean of Goodness! Have mercy on us. (Litany.)

RESOLUTIONS.—Often during the day to recite this pious aspiration.

POINT II

KINDNESS OF THE HEART OF JESUS SHOWN BY HIS WORDS

CONSIDERATION.—What a depth of tenderness breathes in these words, which came not only from the lips but from the Heart of Jesus! “Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you.” “It is I, fear ye not.” “Be of good heart, son; thy sins are forgiven thee.” “Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.” “I am the good Shepherd. The good Shepherd giveth His life for His sheep.” “Be merciful.” “I will have mercy, not sacrifice.”

APPLICATION.—Do our words thus show forth the goodness and tenderness of our hearts? Do we never judge rashly and speak harshly of our neighbor’s conduct finding fault with it when perhaps we do not understand his motives? If so, how unlike are our hearts to the Sacred Heart of Jesus!

AFFECTIONS.—Praise and bless the goodness and amiability of the Heart of Jesus. Ask forgiveness for your insensibility and hardness of heart.

RESOLUTIONS.—Often examine your conscience with regard to your conversations, that you may learn to know your own heart, and make it like to the Heart of Jesus.

POINT III.

KINDNESS OF THE HEART OF JESUS SHOWN BY HIS ACTIONS

CONSIDERATION.—The whole life of our Blessed Lord was spent in *doing good*. He never saw suffering, either bodily or mental, without healing or consoling it. Let us take two instances out of a thousand others. Near the city of Nain, He met a widowed mother inconsolable for the loss of her only son. And He was “moved with mercy” for her, and raised her son to life. On another occasion, when four thousand men had followed Him for three days in the desert, He said to the Apostles, “I have compassion on the multitude, . . . lest they faint in the way.” (St. Matt. 15:32.) The expressions “moved with mercy,” or “have compassion,” occur no less than eight times in the holy Gospels.

APPLICATION.—We therefore do a great injury to the Heart of Jesus when we doubt His mercy, or the pardon of our sins in the Sacrament of Penance; when we look upon His yoke as heavy and difficult to bear; when we exchange confidence for fear, and fear for discouragement, or even despair. Let us be most careful never to offer Him such an insult as this.

COLLOQUY with St. John the Evangelist, who, at the Last Supper, leaned upon the Heart of Jesus, and derived thence that wonderful goodness, that compassionate love, which we find expressed throughout his epistles.

FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART

OUR DUTIES TOWARD THE HEART OF JESUS DWELL-
ING IN OUR TABERNACLES

1st Prel. Behold Jesus shewing you from the Tabernacle His Heart inflamed with love, and saying, "My son, give Me thy heart." (Proverbs 23: 26.)

2d Prel. Ask Him with great fervor to kindle the fire of His love in your heart.

POINT I

WHAT DOES THE HEART OF JESUS DO FOR MEN IN
THE BLESSED SACRAMENT?

CONSIDERATION.— It performs there the office of a *mediator*, continually interceding for us. If God does not utterly exterminate the human race on account of sins which cry for vengeance to heaven, we know that it is because the Heart of Jesus is perpetually pleading with Him, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (St. Luke 23: 34.) It performs the office of a *priest*, sacrificing itself every day for us on a thousand altars. It performs the office of a *father*, feeding us with its own flesh and blood. It performs the office of a *master* and *teacher*, instructing us, by its very condition in the Blessed Sacrament, in the virtues most necessary for us — silence, recollection, humility, contempt of the world, patience, resignation, devotion.

APPLICATION.— These are but a few of the claims which the Heart of Jesus has upon our love. We know them; we understand and feel what it requires of us in return; and yet we are so cold, so dead, even before the Blessed Sacrament, even in our Communion! Whence does this proceed? Is it not from too strong an attachment to the world and to ourselves? Or per-

haps from certain affections which, if not sinful, are at least sensual, taking too strong root in our hearts.

AFFECTIONS.—O Sacred Heart of Jesus! Teach me to die wholly to myself, that I may live but for Thee and by Thee.

RESOLUTIONS.—Frequently during the day to recite this pious aspiration.

POINT II

WHAT DO MEN DO FOR THE HEART OF JESUS?

CONSIDERATION.—Not to speak of Jews and heretics, what return does Jesus receive from those who believe in His Presence in the Blessed Sacrament? From some, it is true, He receives the homage of adoration day and night, and that gratitude and filial devotion which are His due; but only from a few; and what does He receive from others? Neglect, disdain, contempt, profanation, sacrilege.

APPLICATION.—Have we nothing to reproach ourselves with on this head in the past or the present? What shall we say even now of our negligence in visiting the Sacred Heart in the Blessed Sacrament—where it is always burning with love for us—of our many distractions, our little care to make devout preparation and thanksgiving for Holy Communion? Have we not good reason to fear that our dispositions are not such as the Sacred Heart desires to see in us?

AFFECTIONS.—An ardent desire to be one of the few true friends and worshipers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

RESOLUTIONS.—To neglect no means of securing the fulfillment of this desire.

POINT III.

WHAT DOES THE HEART OF JESUS EXPECT OF US,
ESPECIALLY AT THE PRESENT TIME?

CONSIDERATION.—It expects that we should make reparation to it, by extraordinary devotion and fervor, for all the contempt, injuries, and profanations of which so many Catholics are guilty; that to this end we should visit it frequently on this great feast; that we should receive Holy Communion and hear Mass with great devotion, and, if possible, also go to Benediction, and there, in union with the priest, make an act of reparation to the Sacred Heart; or, if we are not able to do this, that we should make it privately.

APPLICATION.—What powerful motives are there at the present day to urge us to do this with all our hearts! Which of us does not owe many blessings and graces to the Heart of Jesus? Who has not numerous sins and infidelities to make reparation for, many graces and benefits to pray for? Add to these private motives other more public ones, especially those which affect the Catholic Church, now so bitterly persecuted, and we shall never tire of finding a thousand different ways of honoring the Sacred Heart.

COLLOQUY with the Blessed Margaret Alacoque to whom Jesus deigned to reveal the secrets of His Heart.

NOTE.—Take from the Supplementary Month (next page) those Meditations which were not used before Ash-Wednesday. Their number will be found to correspond with that of the days remaining before the first of July, with which day the second volume begins; with them is resumed the public Life of our Lord, which was interrupted by the meditations on His sufferings, and on His glorious life.

INTERCALARY MONTH

MEDITATION I

MOTIVES, SIGNS, AND MEANS OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

1st *Prel.* Behold Jesus Christ saying to you, "Be you therefore perfect, as also your Heavenly Father is perfect." (St. Matt. 5:48.)

2d *Prel.* Ask for grace to make constant progress in virtue.

POINT I

MOTIVES OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

CONSIDERATION.— 1st, its *obligation*. As religious we are obliged to aim at and tend toward Christian perfection. Our Blessed Lord's words, "Be you therefore perfect," are for us a positive command. Not a command to attain absolute perfection, which is impossible for any mere creature, but to aspire to it, to seek always after greater perfection by generous and constant efforts — in other words, to make progress in virtue. 2d, its *utility*. To make progress in virtue is to increase our merit, and thereby to increase our glory and happiness in heaven. 3d, its *facility*. Our circumstances are so favorable; instead of obstacles and hinderances we have abundance of every kind of help.

APPLICATION.— Whence comes it, then, that we are still so imperfect, that we make so little progress? From the weakness and inconstancy of our will. We *wish*, but we do not *will* efficaciously. We begin, and leave off again. Progress supposes effort, and we make no effort. We draw back at the smallest difficulty.

AFFECTIONS.—How long, O my soul! wilt thou continue to deceive thyself, and to prepare bitter and vain regrets for the day of thy departure from this world, when God will demand of thee a strict account of the many means of salvation and sanctification intrusted to thee?

RESOLUTIONS.—I will endeavor to overcome tepidity; I will put in practice those resolutions which I recorded in writing during that time of retreat, when, alone with God, my soul was illuminated by the bright light of faith.

POINT II

SIGNS OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

CONSIDERATION.—These are a few of the signs by which you may know if you are making progress in perfection: 1st, if you feel more deeply the happiness of your holy vocation, and value it more and more; 2d, if you fall less frequently into certain venial sins to which you were accustomed; 3d, if you conquer temptations more easily; 4th, if your acts of mortification are more frequent; 5th, if from time to time you have certain attractions which give you more devotion in Holy Communion, in visits to the Blessed Sacrament, etc.; 6th, if you feel more contempt for the world and for all that is not God, and less difficulty in ridding yourself of self-love; 7th, if you bear crosses and humiliations with more courage, patience, and resignation.

APPLICATION.—Try to derive great profit from these considerations; they will greatly enlighten you, and either fill you with joy, or cover you with confusion and shame.

AFFECTIONS.—I will ask of God a generous heart, and I will animate my courage for the spiritual combat by reflecting that advancement in the way of perfection

is not that great difficulty which many persons imagine.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will follow the advice given by the Author of the *Imitation*: “Watch over thyself, stir up thyself, admonish thyself; and whatever becometh of others, neglect not thyself. The greater violence thou offerest to thyself, the greater progress thou wilt make.” (I. Book, xxv.)

POINT III

MEANS OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

CONSIDERATION.—There are three principal ones; the first is to put on your spiritual armor every morning on first waking, resolving to make the day fruitful in victories and good works. The second is to maintain, as far as possible, a spirit of interior joy and confidence. This is a great help in the service of God, as holy David declares, “I have run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou didst enlarge my heart.” (Psalm 118: 32.) The third means, which includes all others, is to preserve your original fervor, or to renew it if it has grown slack. Why do novices generally make such rapid progress? Because they are fervent.

APPLICATION.—Use these means. Use especially those which are most suited to your circumstances or needs and they will bring you joy for all eternity.

COLLOQUY with St. Andrew Corsini Avellino, who made a vow to advance constantly in perfection, and was faithful to it.

MEDITATION II

BAPTISM OF JESUS CHRIST *

HIS PUBLIC LIFE

1st Prel. Behold Jesus taking leave of His Blessed Mother, and going to be baptized before commencing His public life.

2d Prel. Ask for perfect detachment from all worldly and domestic ties.

POINT I

PUBLIC LIFE OF JESUS

CONSIDERATION.—The public and active life of Jesus succeeded His hidden and contemplative life. The moment appointed by the eternal decrees had arrived. The peaceful life which He had led for more than twenty years in the holy home of Nazareth was to come to an end. He must exchange it for a public life, for the laborious and painful work of the ministry. He must give up the society of His Holy Mother and of all His friends, to live on alms among coarse and rude men. All this must have been *naturally* as repugnant to the sweet and tender Heart of Jesus as it would be to ours. But He stifled the voice of nature, and listened only to that of obedience and zeal for souls.

APPLICATION.—Let us do the like, feeling convinced that nothing can be better or safer for us than to go, or to remain, wherever obedience, or rather the voice of God Himself, calls us through our superiors. We have left all things for God; let us not take back any part of the sacrifice by attaching ourselves too strongly to any person or place, or even to certain spiritual con-

* It took place early in January, and when Jesus had completed His thirtieth year.

solutions, which perhaps one office affords us more opportunities of than another.

AFFECTIONS.— Let us offer ourselves to God for any life, however disturbed, that is consistent with our vocation.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will strive ever more and more to die to all that is not God, His will, and His love.

POINT II

BAPTISM OF JESUS

CONSIDERATION.— Jesus desired to commence His public life by an act of great humility, by receiving the Baptism of penance at the hands of His precursor. “Then,” says St. Matthew, “cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan, unto John, to be baptized by him. But John stayed Him, saying, I ought to be baptized by Thee, and comest Thou to me? And Jesus, answering, said to him, Suffer it to be so now; for so it becometh us to fulfill all justice.” (St. Matt. 3: 13–15.) That is to say, We shall give God the glory which is justly due to Him—I by an act of profound humiliation, you by one of blind obedience; and we shall thus repair the injustice done to God by the pride and rebellion of man.

APPLICATION.— Our Blessed Lord taught us two great lessons by this act: 1st, that as Baptism is the first and most necessary of all the Sacraments, so humility is the first and most necessary of all virtues; 2d, that it is by humility, and the obedience which springs from it, that we can best please God, and draw down His blessings on our labors. If these have hitherto been unfruitful, it is perhaps because we have not acted on these principles.

AFFECTIONS.— Thank the Lord Jesus Christ, who by His abasement has purchased our exaltation; who,

by Holy Baptism, has united us with the Church militant, and has even opened for us a way to the Church triumphant which it only depends on us to follow.

RESOLUTIONS.— To maintain in our hearts a spirit of profound humility combined with firm confidence in God.

POINT III

GLORIFICATION OF JESUS

CONSIDERATION.— “He that shall humble himself shall be exalted.” (St. Matt. 23: 12.) This was accomplished at the baptism of Jesus; for we read, “Jesus being baptized, forthwith came out of the water, and lo! the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him. And behold a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (St. Matt. 3: 16, 17.)

APPLICATION.— The same favor which Jesus Christ, as man, merited by the deep humility of His baptism, — in which He mixed with penitents as one of themselves — has been granted gratuitously to us in our baptism. As soon as the holy-water was poured upon our head, the heavens, which before had been closed to us by original sin, were opened, and the Holy Ghost descended upon us, and a voice from heaven said, This is now My beloved child..

COLLOQUY with our Divine Lord. Thank Him for the high privileges conferred on you at Baptism. Renew your resolution of remaining always faithful to the sacred engagements contracted at that time.

MEDITATION III

JESUS IS LED BY THE HOLY GHOST

INTO THE DESERT

1st Prel. Imagine Jesus alone in a frightful desert.

2d Prel. Ask for a ready obedience to the impulses of grace.

POINT I

JESUS, OBEDIENT TO THE IMPULSE OF THE HOLY
GHOST, GOES INTO THE DESERT

CONSIDERATION.—“Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the desert, for the space of forty days.” (St. Luke 4: 12.) Though Jesus Christ possessed, as man, the fullness of wisdom and grace, and was perfectly secure against all error, surprise, or illusion, He would not act except according to the leading of the Holy Ghost, to which He submitted with the utmost docility, as is clear from the sacred text.

APPLICATION.—It is the same Spirit who, by the victorious impulse of grace, has led and drawn us from the midst of a deceitful world into the happy desert of religion; who keeps us there by the attractions of His grace, and who never ceases to guide and urge us onward in the way of perfection. What progress should we not have made if we had always been faithful and docile to His inspirations! But what we have not done in the past, let us do now with constancy and generosity; and since the voice of God is not heard in the midst of noise and tumult, let us diligently keep ourselves in a state of recollection and interior peace. Let us fly from the world, and love solitude; for it is written, “I will allure her, and will lead her into

the wilderness, and I will speak to her heart." (Osee 2: 14.)

AFFECTIONS.—Gratitude, regret for past faults. Pray for a docile and generous heart.

RESOLUTIONS.—Reflect often on these words addressed by the Apostle to the Romans: "*Quicumque Spiritu Dei aguntur, ii sunt filii Dei.*" "Whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Romans 8: 14.)

POINT II

JESUS PRAYS AND FASTS IN THE DESERT

CONSIDERATION.—The obedience of Jesus to the Holy Spirit was generous and heroic. It led Him to separate Himself from the world, and retire into a frightful desert, there to remain during forty days, with no companionship but that of wild beasts: "*Eratque cum bestiis.*" "He was with beasts." (St. Mark 1: 13.) He had no roof to shelter Him from the inclemency of the weather, and He fasted rigorously during the whole time, taking no food whatever. "*Nihil manducavit in diebus illis.*" "He ate nothing in those days." (St. Luke 4: 2.) He also spent the whole time in contemplation, interrupted only by the tears He shed over our miseries, and the prayers He addressed to His Heavenly Father on our behalf. Thus from the baptism of penance He passed on to works of penance, and thus prepared Himself for His public life and ministry.

APPLICATION.—Let us learn these two lessons from our Divine Master: 1st, that holy baptism, which to the early Christians was a call to martyrdom, is to every one a call to penance, and obliges us to live in the constant exercise of penance. "*Christiana vita perpetua pœnitentia esse debet.*" "The life of a

Christian ought to be a perpetual penance," (Council of Trent;) 2d, that we ought to prepare ourselves for active work by retreat, prayer, and mortification, if we wish our labors to be crowned with success. Let us examine how far we have thus acted.

AFFECTIONS.—Pray for the light and strength requisite to discern and follow, in all things, the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

RESOLUTIONS.—To love solitude. To avoid useless walks and conversations. To attend only as far as you are obliged to external things.

POINT III

JESUS IS TEMPTED IN THE DESERT

CONSIDERATION.—“Jesus ductus est in desertum a Spiritu, ut tentaretur a diabolo.” “Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil.” (St. Matt. 4: 1.) In Himself He had no inclination to evil and therefore He permitted the devil to tempt Him. But why should He suffer this terrible and humiliating trial? For our instruction and encouragement. He desired to teach us that temptations are not sins, but that, on the contrary, they serve to keep us humble, watchful, fervent, and thereby more pleasing to God; that they are independent of our will; that neither holiness nor solitude exempts us from them; and that therefore they ought never to trouble or discourage us.

APPLICATION.—Let us then take courage, and lay to heart the words of the Apostle, “God is faithful: who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it.” (1. Cor. 10: 13.)

COLLOQUY with the Holy Angels, who witnessed the penance of our Lord in the Desert.

MEDITATION IV

ON THE THREE TEMPTATIONS OF JESUS

AS RECORDED IN THE GOSPELS

1st Prel. Represent to yourself the devil in a human form, approaching Jesus to tempt Him.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to understand and avoid the snares of the devil.

POINT I

TEMPTATION OF GLUTTONY

CONSIDERATION.— The devil, like a skillful tempter, studies our natural dispositions of body and mind, in order to draw us the more easily into sin. Seeing, therefore, that Jesus, “when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward was hungry,” (St. Matt. 4: 2,) he pretended to take compassion on Him, and approaching Him in human form, said, “If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.” (St. Matt. 4: 3.) It was a temptation of gluttony, in the suggestion that He should satisfy his appetite by a miracle, instead of waiting till His Heavenly Father satisfied it by the ministry of angels. Jesus rebuked him in the words of Deuteronomy, “Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God.” (Deut. 8: 3.)

APPLICATION.— If we are tempted to gluttony — as, for instance, to forestall the appointed hour for meals, to exceed the bounds of religious moderation, to seek too eagerly for what gratifies our palate, or to eat and drink simply for enjoyment, etc.— let us say to ourselves these same words, “Not in bread alone doth man live,” but in the spiritual food of the soul. Let us feed the body for necessity, but the soul in abundance. What folly would it be to entertain our body at the expense of our soul — of our eternal salvation!

AFFECTIONS.— Beg of God to impress on your heart these words of the wise man, “*In multis escis non deerit infirmitas.*” “In many meats there will be sickness,” (Ecclus. 37: 33,) infirmities both of body and mind.

RESOLUTIONS.— To fix on a moderate rule with regard to bodily food and drink, and strictly to adhere to it.

POINT II

TEMPTATION OF VAINGLORY

CONSIDERATION.— Though defeated, the devil returns to the charge. He tries another more subtle form of temptation, addressed to the intellect, which is naturally influenced by the renown of brilliant actions. Having been permitted to exercise power over the body of Jesus, “the devil took Him up into the holy city, and set Him upon the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down; for it is written, that He hath given His angels charge over Thee, and in their hands shall they bear Thee up, lest perchance Thou dash Thy foot against a stone.” (St. Matt. 4: 5, 6.) Such a miracle would have established the authority of Jesus, and prepared the way for the success of His preaching. We must admit that the devil made use of a most specious pretext to tempt Him to vainglory. But Jesus only replied, “It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” (St. Matt. 4: 7.)

APPLICATION.— Let us take warning to be always on our guard against the deceits and snares of the devil. He never retires from the assault. Even our victories furnish him with fresh matter for temptation. If you have resisted gluttony by abstaining from certain delicacies at table, he will inspire you with thoughts of vainglory, or of contempt for those who have not done like yourself. At other times, he will

transform himself into an angel of light, and suggest some evil to you in the disguise of a virtue. For instance, anger, strife, vengeance, under the disguise of zeal; intemperance or idleness, under pretense of care for your health. He will persuade you to run into danger, and in other ways tempt God, under pretense of being a valiant soldier and meriting the palm of victory in heaven.

AFFECTIONS.—“From the snares of the devil, O Lord! deliver us.” (Litany of the Saints.)

RESOLUTIONS.—Not to argue with the Spirit of temptation; but to resist him instantly with indignation, after the example of our Lord.

POINT III

TEMPTATION OF AMBITION

CONSIDERATION.—The devil, insolently taking advantage of the permission to tempt Jesus in every way, took Him to the top of a high mountain, and causing Him to see from thence all the kingdoms of the world, said to Him, “To Thee will I give all this power, and the glory of them; for to me they are delivered, and to whom I will I give them. If Thou, therefore, wilt adore me, all shall be Thine.” (St. Luke 4:6.) “Then Jesus saith to him, Begone, Satan; for it is written, The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil left Him; and behold angels came and ministered to Him.” (St. Matt. 4:10, 11.)

APPLICATION.—Behold how the devil seduces men by lying and false promises, flattering our pride and our evil inclinations. Will you let him deceive you? Behold, on the other hand, how faithful and generous God is in consoling those who resist temptations steadfastly, even sending His Angels to strengthen them.

COLLOQUY with your Guardian Angel.

MEDITATION V

ON TEMPTATIONS IN GENERAL

1st Prel. Consider holy Job in the midst of his cruel temptations, saying, "The life of man upon earth is a warfare."
(Job 7: 1.)

2d Prel. Ask for grace to be faithful and victorious in this warfare with temptation.

POINT I

SOURCES OF OUR TEMPTATIONS

CONSIDERATION.— We are necessarily exposed to temptations on account of original sin, which has implanted its seeds in us, as the earth contains the seeds of all noxious plants. They come to us primarily from the disorder which sin has introduced into our heart, from pride and concupiscence; they come, secondly, from the devil, who, in his despair at having lost heaven, has sworn to spare no pains to hinder us from gaining it; they come, in the third place, from the world—from all the evil that we see and hear around us.

APPLICATION.— We have no right, therefore, to be surprised at the frequency or violence of our temptations, or to expect that age or circumstances will be any security against them. Neither have we any right to attribute all our temptations to the devil, since we often cause them by our own curiosity, intemperance, or idleness, by allowing too much liberty to our senses, or by indulging in certain dangerous intimacies and friendships, against the warning of our conscience. In such cases, we can not fairly accuse the devil of our temptations, nor will such an excuse avail us before the judgment-seat of God.

AFFECTIONS.— "Illumina oculos meos, ne unquam obdormiam in morte." "Enlighten my eyes, that I

never sleep in death," (Ps. 12:4,) closing my eyes to the source of the temptations which beset me, and living in fancied security.

RESOLUTIONS.— In the examination of conscience, to dwell with particular care on the causes of temptation.

POINT II

REMEDY FOR OUR TEMPTATIONS

CONSIDERATION.— "Watch ye, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." (St. Matt. 6:41.) Watching, united to prayer, is then the remedy proposed to us by Jesus Christ against all temptations. And wherein ought our watching to consist? 1st, in observing carefully what things are occasions of sin to us, and avoiding them as far as may be in our power; 2dly, in studying the sources whence our temptations most commonly arise, that we may the more easily apply a remedy; 3dly, in guarding and mortifying our senses, especially our eyes; for the Holy Spirit says, "Death is come up through our windows," (Jer. 9:21;) 4thly, in noticing carefully the first impressions of evil, the first suggestions of the evil one, that we may meet them with prompt and energetic resistance; 5thly, in a constant spirit of recollection, without which this prompt attention and resistance is impossible. "Watch and pray." Pray from the first moment of your waking; adding to the resolution of fighting valiantly against your temptations a demand for the graces necessary to obtain a victory, without which your resolutions will be useless; if we are left to our own strength, we are certain to fail. Pray with humility, but also with the greatest confidence; pray especially at the time of temptation, calling upon the holy names of Jesus and Mary, and you will never be overcome.

APPLICATION.— With what care, with what perseverance, and with what success, have you used these remedies?

AFFECTIONS.— Do not suffer O Lord! that I should be tempted above my strength, nor yet that I should yield to temptation; but grant, on the contrary, that all temptations may tend to my advancement.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will henceforth make better use of the means given me to anticipate and overcome temptation.

POINT III

THE USE OF OUR TEMPTATIONS

CONSIDERATION.— Temptations serve to keep us humble. They detach us from the world, and draw our thoughts and desires to heaven; they also lead us to pray with more devotion; they supply us with a means of making reparation for our sins, and gaining merit; they strengthen us in the practice of virtue, and revive our decaying fervor.

APPLICATION.— It is therefore a great mistake to complain, to be discouraged, or to think that God is angry with us because we are violently tempted. "*Quia acceptus eras Deo, necesse fuit ut tentatio probaret te.*" "Because thou wast acceptable to God," said the angel to Tobias, "it was necessary that temptation should prove thee." (Tob. 12: 13.) These words ought to fill our hearts with a holy joy and consolation.

COLLOQUY with St. Anthony, anchorite, who is remarkable amongst saints for the number, the duration, and the violence of the temptations which he experienced, and which contributed in a great degree to his spiritual advancement.

MEDITATION VI

JESUS MANIFESTED AND ACKNOWLEDGED

BY ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, HIS PRECURSOR

1st Prel. Behold St. John the Baptist pointing out Jesus to the people.*2d Prel.* Ask for grace to forget yourself, and seek only the glory of God.

POINT I

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST POINTING OUT JESUS TO THE PEOPLE

CONSIDERATION.— On leaving the desert, Jesus went to visit and console His precursor, who was suffering under grievous persecution. John, when he saw his Divine Master approaching, pointed Him out to the assembled multitude, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God. . . . The same is He that shall come after me, who is preferred before me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to loose. . . . He it is that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. . . . This is the Son of God. . . . He must increase; but I must decrease." (St. John 1:29, 27, 33, 34; 3:30.)

APPLICATION.— We here see a man of undoubted sanctity, and held in the highest reputation, voluntarily lowering himself in the eyes of the people, and seeking to be forgotten by them, in order to fix their attention exclusively on the Saviour of the world. This is how the Saints humble themselves, that God may be exalted. They keep silence about their own merits, and love to praise others. These are the men to whom God loves to communicate Himself, and to enrich with His consolations and graces. You complain, perhaps, that you are deprived of them; may it not be because God sees that you seek only your own advantage and the esteem of men, even perhaps at the expense of others?

AFFECTIONS—Pray earnestly for sentiments of profound humility combined with an ardent desire to see God praised and glorified by all mankind.

RESOLUTIONS.—Not to speak of yourself. To speak well of others, or at least to avoid discussing their faults without purpose or necessity.

POINT II

HE CALLS JESUS THE LAMB OF GOD

CONSIDERATION.—John, seeing Jesus approaching, said, “Ecce Agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccatum mundi.” “Behold the Lamb of God. Behold Him who taketh away the sin of the world.” (St. John 1: 29.) He is called the Lamb of God, first, because He is the true and only victim worthy of being offered to God, or capable of expiating the sin of the world; secondly, because His meekness and long-suffering, in spite of our provocations, are like the gentleness of a *lamb*; thirdly, because, as a lamb suffers itself to be put to death without uttering a cry, so He spoke only words of pardon for His executioners. It was under this form that Isaias represented the promised Messiah, and His precursor hoped, by reminding them of this, to make the Jews recognize Him.

APPLICATION.—Let us show ourselves worthy of being disciples of the Lamb of God by these three signs: by uniting the sacrifice of ourselves to that of Jesus by the constant practice of mortification; by a gentle, charitable, and patient behavior to every one, even to those who are unfriendly to us; and by offering ourselves to Jesus as victims of love, desiring to suffer much for His glory and the salvation of souls, even should it cost us our life.

AFFECTIONS.—Repeat frequently the following beautiful aspiration of a holy religious: “Moriar

amore, tui qui mortuus es amore mei! ” “ May I die for love of Thee, O Jesus! who hast died for love of me! ”

RESOLUTIONS.— Beware of abusing the patience of the Divine Lamb. Take Him as your model for meekness and the forgiveness of injuries.

POINT III

HE PROCURES DISCIPLES FOR HIM

CONSIDERATION.— St. John had assembled together a great number of disciples by his preaching, and by the report of his holiness. This might have tempted an ordinary man to vanity and ambition; but the Saints care not for their own glory, they seek only the honor of God and the good of souls. Far from seeking to increase the number of his disciples, St. John made every effort to detach them from himself and transfer them to Jesus, taking every opportunity of praising and exalting Him before them.

APPLICATION.— *True* zeal is not afraid of the success of others; it rejoices in whatever good is done by them. *False* zeal, on the contrary, is secretly jealous of the good done by others, especially when it sees itself surpassed in success or in reputation; and this jealousy often shows itself in indirect blame or unkind criticism. We shrink from this description; but are we sure that we are ourselves quite free from such feelings?

COLLOQUY with the holy Precursor of our Lord.

MEDITATION VII

JESUS CALLS DISCIPLES TO HIM

1st Prel. Behold Jesus in the midst of His four first disciples.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to be always among the number of His most fervent disciples.

POINT I

CHOICE OF THE FOUR FIRST DISCIPLES

CONSIDERATION.— After having preached alone for some months, like the early prophets, Jesus sought to assemble disciples around Him. The first of these came from His holy precursor. The fact is thus recorded in St. John's Gospel: Two disciples of St. John the Baptist, having heard him say, "Behold the Lamb of God, . . . followed Jesus." And they said to Him, "Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest Thou? He saith to them, Come and see. They came and saw where He abode, and they stayed with Him that day. And Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two. . . . He findeth first his brother Simon, and saith to him, We have found the Messias. . . . And he brought him to Jesus. And Jesus, looking upon him, saith, Thou art Simon, the Son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted Peter. On the following day He would go forth into Galilee, and He findeth Philip. And Jesus saith to him, Follow Me." (St. John I: 36-43.)

APPLICATION.— Andrew, John, Simon or Peter, and Philip were then the four privileged mortals who were called by the Saviour of the world to be His first disciples. Their vocation may seem to have been a mere accident, but it was decreed by God from all

eternity. Examine the beginning of your vocation; it will seem to have been the result only of favorable circumstances; but with the eye of faith you will perceive the result of an eternal choice on the part of God.

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for sentiments of humble and heartfelt gratitude. Express these feelings with all your heart.

RESOLUTIONS.— Prove your gratitude by ever-increasing fidelity to the spirit of your holy vocation.

POINT II

CONDITION OF THESE FIRST DISCIPLES

CONSIDERATION.— They were honest, hard-working, and pious men, but of low birth, Galilean fishermen, and as such, despised by the Jews; ignorant and obscure men, held in contempt by the world. Why were such men chosen by our Divine Lord? First, to undeceive the world, which can see nothing great or estimable except in riches and honors; secondly, to exalt poverty and simplicity when found united with virtue and honesty; thirdly, to preserve the disciples themselves from all danger of pride in the high office to which they were predestined; but, fourthly and chiefly, to convince the world that the establishment and the triumph of the Church were not the work of man.

APPLICATION.— If you consider this attentively, you will not be inclined, like some religious, to be ashamed of low birth, or to pass yourself off for something different from what you really were in the world, by any affectations of language or manner; neither will you be vain of the rank you have held, or the fortune you may have possessed there. Either of these things will be injurious to you, both before God and man, as you very well know.

AFFECTIONS.— Praise, bless, and glorify the wisdom

of Divine Providence manifested in the selection of those who labor for the Gospel.

RESOLUTIONS.— To think of our former position in the world, whether high or low, only that we may become more humble in our own eyes, and more grateful for God's mercies.

POINT III

THE MANNER OF THEIR VOCATION

CONSIDERATION.— All were not called in the same direct manner, but none were admitted into the company of Jesus except provisionally at first, and on probation. The free disposal of their goods and their person was still left to them; it was only after a certain time of trial that they were allowed to make profession of the perfect poverty and apostolic life of Jesus.

APPLICATION.— Call to mind the beginning, progress, and fulfillment of your vocation, and you will see that it much resembles that of these first disciples. You will also notice, with admiration and joy, that after the lapse of eighteen centuries, the superiors of religious orders still follow the rules traced out by their Divine Master, in the reception of candidates. These thoughts will increase your esteem and love for your holy vocation, and your desire to correspond faithfully with its grace.

COLLOQUY with our Divine Lord, the Author of your holy vocation. Pray for grace to continue faithful to it even until death, being specially diligent in good works and the practice of perfect patience.

MEDITATION VIII

INTERVIEW OF JESUS WITH NATHANAEL

1st Prel. Behold Jesus talking with Nathanael.

2d Prel. Ask for the simplicity and guileless spirit which Jesus praised in Nathanael.

POINT I

PREJUDICES OF NATHANAEL

CONSIDERATION.—No sooner did Philip know Jesus, than he hastened to make Him known also to his friend, Nathanael, who is thought to be the same as St. Bartholomew. “We have found,” he said, “Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write. Jesus, the son of Joseph of Nazareth.” (St. John 1:45.) Thus was Nathanael called to the great privilege of the knowledge and friendship of Jesus. But he was on the point of losing this great grace through a fatal prejudice. He answered contemptuously, “A Nazareth potest aliquid boni esse?” “Can anything of good come from Nazareth?” (St. John 1:46.) And it was only with great difficulty that his friend persuaded him to “come and see.”

APPLICATION.—How many at the present day are kept from Jesus, from His Church, from His Sacraments, by some prejudice! They are indeed worthy of our compassion; but are religious wholly free from prejudice? You are recommended some book for your spiritual reading; but you have a prejudice against the author, and you refuse. Your director advises the practice of certain devotions, which would greatly benefit your soul; but you have been prejudiced against him, he is too particular, etc. You will perhaps find many such instances if you examine yourself carefully.

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for grace to follow the counsel of the Apostle, “*Omnia probate; quod bonum est tenete.*” “Prove all things. Hold fast that which is good.” (1. Thess. 5: 21.)

RESOLUTIONS.— Be on your guard against prepossession and prejudice.

POINT II

STRAIGHTFORWARDNESS OF NATHANAEL

CONSIDERATION.— The contempt which Nathanael entertained for Nazarenes fell upon Jesus personally. But our Blessed Lord was not offended at this, because He saw him to be free from malice, and honestly seeking the truth. Far from reproaching him, He praised him. “*Ecce vere Israelita in quo dolus non est.*” “Behold,” He said, on seeing him approach, “an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile.” (St. John 1: 47.) Blessed indeed is the man who merits such praise from the lips of Jesus. Happy the religious who can flatter himself that in all things he goes straight to God in the simplicity of his heart, having no other intention or desire but to please Him. Very different is the case of one who thinks only of appearing virtuous and exact before men, without being really so in the sight of God.

APPLICATION.— To which of these two descriptions do we belong? The question is a most important one, and deserves our most serious consideration; especially as we are very apt to deceive ourselves on this subject, our pride being always ready to flatter us, and lead us to seek the esteem of men.

AFFECTIONS.— Beg of God to make manifest to you the folly of being satisfied with keeping up the appearance of virtue and priding ourselves on the praises gained by hypocrisy.

RESOLUTIONS.—To examine ourselves occasionally with regard to the purity and uprightness of our intentions.

POINT III

NATHANAEL'S PROFESSION OF FAITH

CONSIDERATION.—Nathanael, astonished at the portrait drawn of him by one who had never seen him, exclaimed, on the impulse of the moment, "Whence knowest Thou me? Jesus answered and said to him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." (St. John 1:48.) In one moment the eyes of the chosen disciple were opened; he felt convinced that no mere man could thus see things secret and hidden, and he exclaimed, with the most lively faith, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel! Jesus answered and said to him, Because I said to thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, thou believest: greater things than these shalt thou see. . . . You shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." (St. John 1:50, 51.)

APPLICATION.—Let us seek God, like Nathanael, with simplicity of heart, and He will reveal Himself to us; He will send lights and graces to us out of heaven, and we shall experience the truth of the inspired words, "He that is a little one, let him turn to Me." (Proverbs 9:16.)

COLLOQUY with your Guardian Angel, who, in all things, accomplishes the will of God with perfect purity of intention.

MEDITATION IX

MANIFESTATION OF JESUS

IN HIS FIRST MIRACLE AT THE MARRIAGE IN CANA
OF GALILEE

1st Prel. Behold Jesus and Mary among the guests at the marriage-feast.

2d Prel. Ask of God miracles of grace for yourself.

POINT I

PRESENCE OF JESUS AND MARY AT THE WEDDING-
FEAST

CONSIDERATION.—“And the third day,” after the interview with Nathanael, “there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the Mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited, and His disciples.” (St. John 2: 1, 2.) One is here tempted to ask why our Divine Lord should have honored this humble marriage with His presence, rather than the nuptials of some person of high rank. First, then, it was to fulfill a duty of friendship and regard toward His Mother’s family; for we find that the bridegroom at this feast was Simon the Canaanite, son of Cleophas, the brother of St. Joseph, who afterward became one of the twelve Apostles; secondly, to show His esteem for virtue in a humble rank of life; thirdly, to promote honor and respect for the marriage contract, ordained by God from the beginning of the world, and soon to be raised to the dignity of a Sacrament.

APPLICATION.—Our Blessed Lord here teaches us that our renunciation of the world need not hinder us from conforming to the customs of society and friendship in our relations with our friends, provided we do not thereby transgress any duty to God, to our neighbor, or our rule. He also teaches us to hold every condition of life in honor, and to show more respect to virtue than rank.

AFFECTIONS.—Congratulate the guests of Cana on

having been blessed with the presence of Jesus and Mary. Pray that they may be present also with you, on every occasion, through faith and love.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will endeavor particularly to take all meals in the presence of God, and as if I were placed beside Jesus and Mary.

POINT II

CARE OF MARY FOR HER GUESTS

CONSIDERATION.—“ And the wine failing, the Mother of Jesus said to Him, They have no wine.” (St. John 2: 3.) Let us here consider two points — the hospitable care of our Lady, and the confidence with which she addresses herself to her Divine Son. Perceiving that the small quantity of wine (the ordinary beverage of the country) set apart for the use of the guests was exhausted, and that they would be put to inconvenience, without waiting to be asked, she briefly remarked to her Son, “ They have no wine.” She did not even make any request, so perfect was her confidence that the mere statement of her need would be sufficient; and though He seemed to repulse her by His reply, “ Woman, what is it to Me and to thee? * My hour is not yet come,” she nevertheless “ saith to the waiters, Whatsoever He shall say to you do ye.” (St. John 2: 4, 5.)

APPLICATION.— We see here how compassionately our Lady interests herself in even the most trifling things which concern us, and also what power she has with God, who is willing to grant all things through her intercession. Our confidence in her should be un-

* Others translate thus: “ Woman, what is it to Me and to thee?” (the want of wine—the privation.) Jesus, in this instance, does not address the Blessed Virgin as His Mother, in order to show the assembled guests that He worked miracles, not as Man, and the Son of Mary, but as the Eternal Son of God. We may add that the word *woman*, in Hebrew, when used as a form of address, has not the same familiar signification as with us.

limited, since she can dispose of the infinite power of her Divine Son. Do we wish to obtain miraculous favors? She teaches us what method to adopt — *to do all that Jesus shall say to us* by the mouth of our superiors; in other words, *blind obedience*.

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for us, Holy Mother of God, that we may be worthy of the promises made to us by Jesus Christ, in return for those we made to Him at our profession.

RESOLUTIONS.— Frequently thank the Blessed Virgin for those graces which, without our knowledge, she has obtained for us through her unsought intercession.

POINT III

MIRACLE WORKED BY JESUS FOR THE SAKE OF MARY

CONSIDERATION.— Mary's expectation was not disappointed. Jesus, anticipating the appointed time for her sake, worked His first miracle in public, changing into wine the water with which He had caused six water-pots of stone, each containing two or three measures, to be filled. Thus did He, as the Evangelist says, "manifest His glory," or divinity, "and His disciples believed in Him." (St. John 2: 11.)

APPLICATION.— The miracle which Jesus performed in Cana for the wedding guests, He repeats daily for us in a still more wonderful and excellent manner, when, by the ministry of His priests, He changes wine into His blood, and makes us partakers of it in holy Communion. Let us show our gratitude for so much love.

COLLOQUY with our Lord. Recognize and adore Him as the Ruler of the elements and of the hearts of men. Beg of Him to soften our hard and insensible hearts, and to inflame them with His Divine Love.

MEDITATION X

JESUS LEAVES HIS HOLY MOTHER:

HE INVITES HIS DISCIPLES TO LEAVE ALL, AFTER HIS
EXAMPLE

1st Prel. Consider Jesus saying to you, "Come ye after Me."

2d Prel. Ask for grace to make constant progress in the imitation of Jesus Christ.

POINT I

JESUS LEAVES HIS MOTHER: HIS PERFECT DETACH-
MENT

CONSIDERATION.— After leaving Cana, Jesus "went down to Capharnaum, He, and His mother, and His brethren,* and His disciples, and they remained there not many days." (St. John 2:12.) These last words, "They remained there not many days," are very remarkable. They refer to the last days which He spent under the same roof with His mother and other relations. From that time we may truly say that He had neither mother nor home any more on earth. He was thenceforward only "the Son of Man;" one sent from God, and entirely given up to His divine mission, going about from place to place where the

* Amongst the Hebrews, it was customary to designate cousins-german as *brethren*. It is generally believed that such was the relationship existing between our Lord and the four brothers: James the Apostle, called *the Less*, author of the Catholic Epistle; Joseph, one of the seventy-two disciples; Simon the Apostle, called the Chananian; Jude or Thaddeus, the Apostle, author of the Canonical Epistle; and Mary and Salome, the two sisters of the above. These six persons were the children of Cleophas, or Alpheus, the brother of Saint Joseph, and son of Jacob, the brother of Saint Anne. Salome, the wife of Zebedee, was the mother of the two Apostles — James, called *the Greater*, because he was chosen before his uncle, was celebrated in Spain, and suffered martyrdom at Jerusalem under Herod, and Saint John, the Evangelist. The three Marys mentioned at the death and resurrection of our Lord are: the mother of James the Less, Mary Salome, and Mary Magdalene. These details will hereafter be found necessary for the better understanding of many of the Meditations.

glory of God and the salvation of souls called Him.

APPLICATION.—It behooves apostolic men, and those religious who have embraced an active life, to change their place of abode frequently. Their rule obliges them to go wherever obedience calls them, to work for the greater glory of God and the good of souls. These frequent changes are often very trying to nature: have we submitted to them promptly, and in a spirit of indifference?

AFFECTIONS.—Pray for perfect detachment from persons and places. Offer yourself to go and to labor where you will have least natural satisfaction.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will resist, without hesitation, any feelings of dislike for particular dwelling-places, saying to myself, "Thou wilt be well placed only where God calls thee through obedience."

POINT II

JESUS INVITES ANDREW AND PETER TO MAKE THE
ACT OF RENUNCIATION OF WHICH HE HAS
SET THEM THE EXAMPLE

CONSIDERATION.—Jesus, having given an example of the perfect renunciation of all natural affections, in order to devote Himself exclusively to His divine mission, invited those of His disciples who were to share that mission and to perpetuate it, to make the same act of self-sacrifice. "Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee," says St. Matthew, "saw two brethren, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, (for they were fishers;) and He saith to them, Come you after me, and I will make you to be fishers of men. And they, immediately leaving their nets, followed Him," (St. Matt. 4: 18-20,) bursting asunder all domestic ties, renouncing all property and all liberty to dispose of themselves, and resolving to imitate the voluntary poverty, the perfect chastity, and the laborious work of their Divine Master.

APPLICATION.— We see here the first example of the *practice* of the evangelical counsels, which are so contrary to the maxims of the world and the inclinations of nature. Who would ever have embraced them, if God made man had not first set the example? We must certainly attribute it as much to the force of example as to the workings of Divine grace that the first disciples embraced them so promptly. If you wish to draw others to the practice of virtue, you must preach by example as well as precept.

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for grace to understand these words of Christ: “Every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth, can not be My disciple.” (St. Luke 14: 33.)

RESOLUTIONS.— To reconcile myself to this sacrifice, I will often reflect on these words of the *Imitation*: “No one is happier than he who has no attachment for this world.”

POINT III

JESUS INVITES JAMES AND JOHN TO MAKE THE SAME SACRIFICE

CONSIDERATION.—“And going on from thence, He saw other two brethren, James, the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them. And they forthwith left their nets and father, and followed Him.” (St. Matt. 4: 21, 22.)

APPLICATION.— What admirable generosity and correspondence with grace do we here see, both in the father and his sons! There is neither hesitation on one side, nor complaint or opposition on the other. Oh! what a happiness for us, if we have corresponded generously with the first grace of our vocation! Oh! why have we not corresponded with the same fidelity to every other?

COLLOQUY with the first four disciples of Jesus, or with our Lord Himself.

MEDITATION XI

The first Easter, from which is commonly reckoned the commencement of the three years' public ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

ZEAL OF JESUS FOR HIS FATHER'S HOUSE

1st Prel. Behold Jesus driving the buyers and sellers out of the Temple with a scourge.

2d Prel. Ask for great zeal for the glory and the house of God.

POINT I

ARDENT ZEAL OF JESUS

CONSIDERATION.—“ And the Pasch of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.” But this year He went not as a simple worshiper, but as a Master and Reformer, and He proclaimed Himself such by a striking act of authority: “ He found in the Temple them that sold oxen, and sheep, and doves, and the changers of money sitting. And when He had made, as it were, a scourge of little cords, He drove them all out of the Temple, the sheep also, and the oxen, and the money of the changers He poured out, and the tables He overthrew.” (St. John 2: 13-15.) He was resolved to put an end to a scandalous, sacrilegious, and inveterate abuse which a sordid love of gain had established. For this reason Jesus outwardly manifested indignation and anger, without, however, permitting the interior peace of His soul to be disturbed.

* From this Passover, called *the First*, (25th March,) the first of the three years of our Lord's preaching is usually dated. At about the same time ended the imprisonment of Saint John the Baptist, His precursor, who was cast into prison by Herod Antipas, the son of that Herod who murdered the Innocents.

APPLICATION.—To show *just* anger is not only no sin, but often an act of virtue and a necessity. “*Ira-scimini et nolite peccare.*” “Be angry, and sin not.” (Eph. 4:26.) It is sometimes necessary with our inferiors or subjects to make them feel the seriousness of their faults, and sometimes with ourselves. Perhaps you have long been addicted to some habit of sin which causes scandal or secret remorse; you must get rid of it. Use a holy indignation and the rod of Divine justice against yourself, and lay it not aside till you have conquered yourself.

AFFECTIONS.—Pray for grace always to preserve self-command, even when moved by just indignation.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will guard against the mistake of looking on manifestations of temper or of wounded pride, as proofs of religious zeal.

POINT II

DISCRETION OF THE ZEAL OF JESUS

CONSIDERATION.—“And to them that sold doves, He said, Take these things hence.” (St. John 2:16.) Why this greater consideration for these persons? Because they were poor, more ignorant, and less guilty than the others. Moreover, if He had dealt with them as with the first mentioned, He would have deprived them of their only means of subsistence, which would have been most repugnant to His infinite goodness. He therefore only frightened without hurting them.

APPLICATION.—Learn to temper your zeal with discretion, and to moderate it by charity. Do we not often fail in this, and is it not the cause of many failures? Indiscreet zeal does more harm than good.

AFFECTIONS.—Contemplate and admire the union of severity with meekness, manifested in the Person and the actions of our Lord. Pray for grace to follow this Divine Example, that your zeal may resemble His.

RESOLUTIONS.— To guard against the first emotions of anger. To reflect before acting, particularly when about to take any important step.

POINT III

JUSTIFICATION OF THE ZEAL OF JESUS

CONSIDERATION.— Jesus was pleased to justify His severity to the Jews in these words: “Make not the house of My Father a house of traffic.” (St. John 2: 16.) What ought to be the thoughts of a Christian in considering these words? If Jesus judged it to be a profanation deserving of the most severe punishment to buy and sell in the Temple what was necessary for the sacrifices therein offered, how must He regard the public and secret sins by which our churches, so much holier than the Temple at Jerusalem, are profaned? With what severity will He not one day punish them!

APPLICATION.— Let us apply these words to ourselves. Do we seek to make reparation for the insults offered to God in the holy place by exterior reverence and devotion? Have we not, on the contrary, much negligence and many irreverent looks and gestures to reproach ourselves with?

COLLOQUY with those Angels whose charge it is to watch over your church or oratory.

MEDITATION XII

ON ZEAL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD

1st Prel. Consider the words of St. Paul, "Do all to the glory of God." (1. Cor. 10: 31.)

2d Prel. Ask for a great zeal for the glory of God.

POINT I

NATURE OF ZEAL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD

CONSIDERATION.— *The extrinsic glory of God*, as He has manifested Himself in the work of creation, consists in receiving from man, a being gifted with intelligence, and alone capable of knowing the Author of his being and of all the wonders of the universe, the acknowledgment that all honor and glory belong to God alone, together with the most profound reverence and adoration, and an entire offering of himself. *Zeal for the glory of God* consists in an ardent desire to inspire others with these feelings, and, if possible, to fill all hearts with them.

APPLICATION.— What can be more just and equitable than this *zeal for the glory of God*? Every good son has naturally his father's glory and interests at heart. God is the Father of us all. We owe Him our life and all that we possess. Ought not, then, zeal for His glory to be our most natural feeling? Ought not all men to be constantly blessing and praising Him? But alas! it is not so. The truth is, most men still deserve the reproach addressed by Moses to the children of Israel, "He forsook God who made him, and departed from God his Saviour." (Deut. 32: 15.) Though we are religious, do we not sometimes deserve this reproach? Do we not sometimes think more of ourselves than of God, and resent an injury done to ourselves more than an insult offered to Him?

AFFECTIONS.—Lament the blindness of men. Mourn over your own insensibility. Pray for zeal for God's glory, and forgetfulness of self.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will always endeavor to recite with great fervor the words, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost."

POINT II

EXCELLENCE OF ZEAL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD

CONSIDERATION.—Nothing can possibly be greater or more excellent than the end which God Himself had in view in all His works. And this end was Himself and His own glory. "Universa propter semetipsum operatus est Dominus." "The Lord hath made all things for Himself." (Prov. 16:4.) This also was His end in creating man in His own image. "In gloriam meam creavi eum." "I have created him for My glory." (Isaias 43:7.) Hence the conclusion, or rather the precept, of the Apostle, "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God." (1. Cor. 10:31.) What a privilege for man to work for the same end as God! Could he desire a higher destiny?

APPLICATION.—To us especially, as religious, it belongs to promote not only the glory, but the *greater glory*, of God. First in ourselves, offering Him a perpetual homage; striving to know and do His holy will in all things, and never to oppose it by the very least contradiction; and then to promote it in others, by laboring to make them love and serve God, and by co-operating in all good works, if not actively, at least by offering our prayers and Communions, or the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for them.

AFFECTIONS.—Beg of God to make of us docile and efficacious instruments for His glory.

RESOLUTIONS.— To value knowledge and renown only so far as they contribute to the glory of God.

POINT III

GREAT MERIT OF ZEAL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD

CONSIDERATION.— Since nothing can be more excellent than works undertaken *for the glory of God*, it follows that nothing can be of greater merit in His sight, or procure greater glory for us in eternity, according to His own words, “Quicumque glorificaverit me, glorificabo eum.” “Whosoever shall glorify Me, him will I glorify.” (I. Kings 2: 30.)

APPLICATION.— These considerations should make us anxious to seize every opportunity of exercising zeal for the glory of God. We shall find such opportunities everywhere, even without going out of the house, in leading others to perfection by our good example, and thus making them instrumental to the glory of God.

COLLOQUY with St. Francis Xavier, remarkable for his boundless and active zeal.

MEDITATION XIII

NICODEMUS COMES TO JESUS BY NIGHT

1st Prel. Behold Nicodemus, a man greatly respected both for his age and authority, humbly questioning and listening to Jesus.

2d Prel. Ask Jesus to make the energy of your will always correspond with the light of your understanding.

POINT I

COURAGE AND COWARDICE OF NICODEMUS

CONSIDERATION.— The more than human authority which Jesus had shown in driving the buyers and sellers from the Temple had caused a great commotion in Jerusalem. “Many believed,” says St. John, “seeing His signs which He did.” (St. John 2:23.) “And there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.” He was an upright man, in search of the truth. He believed that Jesus was a true prophet, and thought it his duty to seek instruction from Him. But to do this it was necessary to set human respect at defiance, and to brave the anger of the rulers, who had openly declared themselves against Jesus, calling Him a Nazarene impostor, and a deceiver of the people. Nicodemus had courage enough to trample these difficulties under foot, but with a sad mixture of cowardice; that no one might notice him, he “venit ad Jesum nocte,” “came to Jesus by night.” (St. John 3:2.)

APPLICATION.— Is not this mixture of courage and cowardice that we see in Nicodemus a faithful portrait of ourselves? We have had courage to forsake all things for the love of God, and to embrace a manner of life painful to nature; we have courage to persevere in our choice: and yet what unfaithfulness to our rules,

to our resolutions, to our duties, do we not constantly fall into, out of cowardice, human respect, or lukewarmness! Let us make a firm determination that by the grace of God it shall be so no longer.

AFFECTIONS.—In the presence of God, acknowledge in detail your many weaknesses, your inconsistency and infidelity. Humble yourself, and ask His pardon.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will endeavor to discover the chief cause of those imperfections with which I have to reproach myself, in order that I may be able henceforth to avoid them.

POINT II

LIGHT AND DARKNESS OF NICODEMUS

CONSIDERATION.—Nicodemus, on approaching Jesus, said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that Thou art come a Teacher from God; for no man can do these signs which Thou dost, unless God be with him.” (St. John 3:2.) This profession of faith shows Nicodemus to have been much more enlightened than the other members of the council, and yet he was still groping in thick darkness. He did not recognize Jesus as the Messiah; or at all events, he so far misapprehended His doctrines as to deserve the reproach, “Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?” (St. John 3:10.)

APPLICATION.—We are not wanting in the intelligence which concerns the excellency of Christian perfection; we perhaps have enough of proficiency in it to be “masters in Israel,” and to teach others. But when there is question of acting according to our knowledge, we are suddenly involved in darkness; the motives for keeping certain resolutions, such as to rise at the first sound of the bell, to take a reproof silently, to observe

an abstinence, etc., no longer appear to us sufficiently conclusive, and we give up our resolutions. We reconsider them. Have we not often noticed in ourselves this contrast of light and darkness, generosity and weakness? What a subject for humiliation before God, and distrust in ourselves!

AFFECTIONS.— Endeavor to express these sentiments in prayer before God.

RESOLUTIONS.— At times of darkness or desolation of spirit, make no change in the resolutions already formed.

POINT III

GOOD-WILL AND PROCRASTINATION OF NICODEMUS

CONSIDERATION.— Nicodemus went out from his interview with Jesus an altered man. His mind was illuminated with the light of faith, and his heart enkindled with the love of his Lord. He had become His faithful and fervent disciple. Nevertheless he does not seem eager to express his faith by acts. He never even mingles among the disciples who follow Jesus. It was not till two years later, at the death of Jesus, that he signalized himself by an heroic act of piety and devotion, boldly going to Pilate to demand the body of his Divine Master, and providing it with a magnificent burial.

APPLICATION.— Perhaps we, too, notwithstanding a certain amount of good-will, have been slow in the actual service of God. Perhaps we have as yet done nothing great or heroic for Him. But let us not be discouraged. Nicodemus redeemed his tardiness heroically, and merited to be counted among the saints. (Martyrol. Aug. 3.) Let us follow his example.

COLLOQUY with the blessed Nicodemus.

MEDITATION XIV

JEALOUSY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST'S DISCIPLES

1st Prel. Behold St. John teaching his disciples, who are animated with a mistaken zeal for his glory.

2d Prel. Ask for forgetfulness of self, and a true zeal for God's glory.

POINT I

JEALOUSY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST'S DISCIPLES

CONSIDERATION.— After the conversions and miracles which had taken place in Jerusalem, “ Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and baptized. . . . Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples.” This excited the jealousy of St. John the Baptist's disciples, and they went to him and complained, “ Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond the Jordan, to whom thou gavest testimony, behold He baptizeth, and all men come to Him.” (St. John 3 : 22, 26.)

APPLICATION.— We have here a proof that even good people are liable to envy, and that this passion sometimes puts on the appearance of zeal; for the zeal of the disciples of St. John for his glory caused them to view the success of Jesus and His Disciples with displeasure. Instead of rejoicing, they were grieved at it. Do we find nothing of the kind in ourselves? When good is done by some other order, or even when we find ourselves eclipsed and surpassed by one of our brethren, do we rejoice, or do we feel the sting of jealousy? Does not our readiness to blame and criticize answer for us?

AFFECTIONS.— At the feet of Jesus express your horror of jealousy. Pray that, through His grace, you may never yield to this passion.

RESOLUTIONS.— To all temptations of jealousy, reply in these words of St. Paul: “Dum Christus annuncietur, gaudeo sed et gaudebo.” “So that by all means Christ be preached, no matter by whom, I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.” (Philip. 1: 18.)

POINT II

DISINTERESTEDNESS OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

CONSIDERATION.— St. John's disciples expected to find him share their feelings; but they were greatly mistaken. There is no envy in the hearts of the Saints; wholly detached from themselves and their own interests, they seek only the glory of God. This disinterestedness was most remarkable in the precursor of Jesus Christ: his only reply to the complaints of his disciples was to exalt Jesus and depreciate himself. “He that cometh from above is above all. I am sent before Him.” “My joy therefore is fulfilled.” (St. John 3: 31, 28, 29.)

APPLICATION.— How rare, even amongst Christians, is this perfect detachment and forgetfulness of self! It charms while it astonishes us in a secular person, but it is expected, and with good reason, from a religious. In what degree do we possess it? If we are thoroughly rooted in this virtue, we shall gladly hear and repeat the praises of those who are more highly gifted and more esteemed than ourselves. If we can not do this, we must conclude that we are not yet detached from the world and from ourselves.

AFFECTIONS.— An ardent desire to die to the world, and especially to self-love, whence spring envy and neglect of God's service.

RESOLUTIONS.— Say often with the Apostle, “To the only God be honor and glory!” (1. Tim. 1: 17.)

POINT III

ABNEGATION OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

CONSIDERATION.—“*Illum oportet crescere, me autem minui.*” “He must increase, but I must decrease.” (St. John 3:30.) St. John the Baptist carried his disinterestedness to the extent of a total abnegation of self. He not only loses sight of his own works, and rejoices in the still greater ones of Jesus, but he even desires that these last should wholly eclipse his own in the sight and esteem of the world.

APPLICATION.—If we desire to escape the attacks of vainglory and envy, we must, after this example, so completely subdue our pride as to aim at an entire abnegation of ourselves, and a desire to be forgotten and despised by others. We need not despair of reaching this perfection: all things are possible to grace.

COLLOQUY with the holy Precursor of our Lord. Beg of Him earnestly to obtain for us grace to see clearly how deceitful, fatal, contemptible, and criminal is the passion of envy. May he obtain for us grace to dread its approaches, and to overcome its attacks, so that dying to self-love, we may seek in all things only the greater glory of God.

MEDITATION XV

OF PRIDE, AND ITS FATAL EFFECTS

1st Prel. Behold Lucifer falling from heaven down to hell.
 2d Prel. Ask for a salutary fear of the spirit of pride.

POINT I

NATURE OF PRIDE

CONSIDERATION.— In order to be secure against the attacks of envy and other unruly passions, we must trace them to their source, which is pride, the result and the punishment of original sin, as the Holy Ghost teaches in these memorable words: “Never suffer pride to reign in thy mind or in thy words; for from it all perdition took its beginning.” (Tobias 4: 14.)

APPLICATION.— To be convinced of this truth, we have only to consider the nature of this terrible and mortal sin. *Pride is the inordinate love of our own glory.* Hence proceed vainglory and ambition, which in their turn produce intrigues, hypocrisy, human respect; hence proceed lying, prevarication, contumacy, obstinacy, contentions, divisions; hence, again, proceed selfishness and jealousy, which lead to endless sins against charity. We feel annoyed at the success of others; we rejoice at their faults or misfortunes; we injure them, by suspicions and rash judgments, in our own esteem, and often also in that of others, by detraction, calumny, malicious insinuations, and the like.

AFFECTIONS.— Humbly acknowledge your faults. Repent of them. Endeavor to detest pride.

RESOLUTIONS.— To resist strenuously the first emotions of pride, by humbling yourself before God.

POINT II

THE SIN OF PRIDE

CONSIDERATION.— The desire for our own glory is called unruly, because it is directly opposed to the supreme rule of all justice. To every one his due. Now God alone is the author of all that is good and excellent in His creatures; to Him alone therefore is due all the honor and glory thereof: “Soli Deo honor et gloria.” (I. Tim. I: 17.) But the proud man exalts *himself* on account of his gifts either of nature or grace. He makes use of them to gain the praise and esteem of others, and thus puts himself, as it were, in the place of God. Is it surprising, then, that God should abominate him? “Abominatio Domino omnis arrogans.” “Every proud man is an abomination to the Lord.” (Prov. 16: 5.) “Deus superbis resistit, humilibus autem dat gratiam.” “God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.” (St. James 4: 6.)

APPLICATION.— In order to understand more clearly what is the sinfulness of pride in God’s sight, and to conceive a lively horror of it, call to mind the terrible chastisements inflicted on the pride of the angels, of our first parents, of Pharaoh, of Nabuchodonosor, of Antiochus, and so many others recorded in Holy Scripture; consider also how severely God punished pride in the holy kings David and Ezechias, who had only been guilty of vanity — one in numbering his subjects, and the other in showing the treasures of his palace. Remember also how God has threatened to abandon the proud to their own evil passions, even to the most shameful excesses. How many religious have fallen through pride into apostasy or profligacy!

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for a just appreciation and an

ever-increasing horror of pride, that you may never become its slave or its victim.

RESOLUTIONS.—Repress all feelings of pride by reflecting on the rebel angels, cast from heaven into hell.

POINT III

MISERY OF PRIDE

CONSIDERATION.—How sad is the case of a proud religious! He is wretched because his labors, his watchings, his struggles, will have no reward in heaven. “They have” already “received their reward,” (St. Matt. 6:2,) as our Lord told the proud Pharisees. Wretched because, instead of the esteem of men, which he seeks, he will receive only their contempt. “Odi-bilis coram Deo est et hominibus superbia.” “Pride is hateful before God and man.” (Ecclus. 10:7.) Wretched because he is perpetually tormented by the desire to increase his reputation, and the fear of losing it; always agitated by dark suspicions or vain apprehensions.

APPLICATION.—If experience has taught you the truth of all this, hasten to profit by it; redouble your vigilance and energy in resisting this most powerful enemy of your salvation and progress in perfection.

COLLOQUY with your Guardian Angel. Beg of him to assist you continually in overcoming the suggestions of pride.

MEDITATION XVI

OF THE NATURE AND NECESSITY OF

HUMILITY

1st Prel. Behold Jesus Christ saying to you, "Many that are first shall be last, and the last first." (St. Mark 10: 31.)

2d Prel. Ask for grace to increase continually in the knowledge, love, and practice of humility.

POINT I

NATURE OF HUMILITY

CONSIDERATION.—Humility is the root of all virtues, as pride is the root of all sins. St. Bernard thus defines it: "An acquired virtue or habit, by means of which man despises himself and desires to be despised by others." In other words, it is a disposition or habit of mind and heart by which man, seeing nothing in himself but sin, and the inclination to sin, despises himself, and esteems God alone, the source of all good, being content, and even desirous, to be forgotten and despised by men, that God alone may be praised and glorified.

APPLICATION.—To ascertain if we possess this virtue, let us apply to ourselves the rule of Jesus Christ, "Ex fructu arbor cognoscitur." "By the fruit the tree is known." (St. Matt. 12: 33.) Let us examine our thoughts, words, and actions. *Our thoughts.* If we care less what God thinks of us than what men think, and are more anxious to please men than God; if our thoughts tend to exalt ourselves, to the desire for superiority, or for a position of mark in the world, we have not humility. *Our words.* If we think ourselves humble because we sometimes speak ill of ourselves, because we often accuse ourselves of our faults

before the community, while at the same time we fret and complain if others speak ill of us, reprove, humble, or injure us, we may rest well assured that we are not really humble, and still less if we have recourse to lies or excuses to palliate our faults. *Our actions.* However good and praiseworthy they may seem before men, if we have sought our own glory in them, we may be sure that before God we are devoid of humility; and if so, how can we ever become good religious?

AFFECTIONS.— Beg of God to enlighten and assist you by His Divine grace to become humble and confirmed in humility.

RESOLUTIONS.— Instead of being discouraged when I commit a fault, I will make it a means of humbling myself before God.

POINT II

NECESSITY OF HUMILITY

CONSIDERATION.— The same is true of humility as of faith, that without it it is impossible to please God; because without humility we worship ourselves, and thus become hateful and abominable in the sight of God. Without humility there is no solid virtue, because it is the root of all virtues. Without humility there is no grace; for God “*humilibus dat gratiam*,” “giveth grace to the humble,” (St. James 4:6;) without grace we can not merit, and without either virtue or merit we can not enter heaven; consequently, without humility there is no salvation. Our Lord expressly tells us this. “Unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (St. Matt. 18:3.) He said this on the occasion of a dispute having arisen amongst His Apostles as to which of them should be the greatest; He therefore especially

referred to the *humility* and *simplicity* of children. Still more evidently, without humility there can be no progress in perfection; and we are bound by our vows to aim at perfection. Without humility we are useless, or almost useless, to others, and yet we are bound to labor for their salvation. How can God bless labor in which we seek our own glory? Without humility, therefore, we can never attain the double end of our vocation; we can have no hope of persevering in it, nor can we ever find in it the peace and happiness which we sought. Is not this a true interpretation of our Saviour's words, "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart"? (St. Matt. 11: 29.)

APPLICATION.—Are we well persuaded of the necessity of humility? What means do we adopt to acquire it? And with what success? Let us answer these questions in all sincerity, *before God*.

COLLOQUY with Christ, the perfect Master and admirable Model of humility, of that form of humility which is most contrary to nature, namely, the love and the practice of humiliations. Beg of Him to assist us to advance in the exercise of this virtue. Ask this grace through the indescribable humiliations which He endured for us in His birth, in His hidden life, and throughout His public life and His sorrowful Passion.

MEDITATION XVII

ADVANTAGES AND PROPERTIES

OF THE VIRTUE OF HUMILITY

1st Prel. Consider St. Peter saying, "To the humble He giveth grace." (1. St. Peter 5: 5.)

2d Prel. Ask for grace to reach a high degree of humility.

POINT I

ADVANTAGES OF HUMILITY

CONSIDERATION.— We may apply to humility what has been said of wisdom, "Venerunt mihi omnia bona pariter cum illa." "All good things came to me together with her." (Wisdom 7: 11.) Happy, then, the religious who possesses her! His progress in virtue will be rapid and constant, his joy continual. In fact, the humble religious, being fully convinced of his own unworthiness, and of the infinite majesty of God, has necessarily: 1st, a good intention, which makes all his actions meritorious; 2dly, the love of God, and consequently the love of crosses and sufferings, because love is proved by things painful to nature; 3dly, zeal for the glory of God, which he desires to promote in himself and others: he would gladly bring all men to the feet of Jesus Christ; 4thly, distrust of himself, and consequently prudence, modesty, and discretion in his words; 5thly, obedience, docility, and that perfect openness with superiors to which they lead; 6thly, patience and resignation under all trials, which appear to him far less than he deserves from the justice of God; 7thly, indifference to all places or offices; for he thinks himself unworthy of all, and yet capable of anything by the help of God; 8thly, charity and kindness — he is severe with himself, but indulgent to others; 9thly, and

finally, peace of heart — he is never unhappy. Neglect, contempt, injuries which disturb the proud man, are his delight. As a great Saint once said, “*Habet portatile cœlum.*” “He carries heaven about with him.” (Bellar. de Z. Sol.)

APPLICATION.— These considerations will make us love and esteem humility as the “pearl of great price,” (St. Matt. 13: 46,) spoken of by our Blessed Lord, and, like the merchant in the parable, we shall gladly sell all that we have, to buy it.

AFFECTIONS.—“*Noverim te, noverim me.*” “Grant me to know Thee, O God! and to know myself!” (St. Aug.) That the knowledge of myself, which is the foundation of humility, may assist me to acquire that virtue.

RESOLUTIONS.— To recite this aspiration of the great St. Augustine very frequently.

POINT II

PROPERTIES OF HUMILITY

CONSIDERATION.— Let us examine well the nature and properties of humility, that we may avoid certain very common mistakes. Many imagine that humility is something forced and unnatural, while in reality it is most conformable to truth and justice; but for the disorder consequent upon original sin, we should all be naturally humble. Others think that humility forbids us to conceal our faults, to sustain our just rights and privileges, to let our talents be known to others, or even to ourselves, to allow ourselves to be respected or esteemed by our subordinates for our wise and careful management of affairs. All this is a mistake. None of these things are contrary to humility, when they are necessary for the glory of God, or the good of souls, and when we have no other end in view, no desire for

our own interests or aggrandizement. Others, again, think that humility is the same as cowardice, that a humble man must not undertake great or enterprising works. On the contrary, where a proud man would recoil before difficulties and the fear of failure or ridicule, the humble man, putting all such thoughts aside, goes steadily forward. Nothing seems impossible to him; for he says with the Apostle, "*Omnia possum in eo, qui me confortat.*" "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me." (Philip. 4: 13.)

APPLICATION.—Behold Mary, the most humble of virgins; she acknowledges and publishes to all the world the great privileges and graces she has received. "*Fecit mihi magna, qui potens est.*" "He that is mighty hath done great things to me." (St. Luke 1: 49.) But she ascribed all the glory to God. "*Magnificat anima mea Dominum.*" "My soul doth magnify the Lord." (St. Luke 1: 46.) Again, consider St. Paul. He vigorously maintained his rights as a Roman citizen before the heathen; and before the Asiatic Christians he put forward his labors and revelations as a claim upon their love, respect, and obedience; but he did it only for the furtherance of the Gospel. When it only concerned himself personally, he suffered persecutions and injuries in silence, and regarded himself as the last of the Apostles.

COLLOQUY with the Blessed Virgin. Thank her for having obtained for you the knowledge and love of humility. Beg, through her intercession, the grace to advance in the practice of humility of heart and mind.

MEDITATION XVIII

ON THE PRINCIPAL MEANS

TO ACQUIRE AND STRENGTHEN HUMILITY

1st Prel. Consider the words of the Apostle, "He humbled Himself, for which cause also God hath exalted Him." (Phil. 2: 8, 9.)

2d Prel. Ask for courage to practice all means of acquiring and increasing humility.

POINT I

TO AVOID ALL THAT WOUNDS HUMILITY

CONSIDERATION.—If we desire the friendship of any one, we avoid all that could wound his feelings. If, then, we desire to obtain humility as the companion of our life, we must be careful above all that nothing in our thoughts, words, or actions should savor of pride or nourish vanity. We must not dwell with complacency on any good actions in our past lives, but rather remember our sins as a contrast to them; we must meet temptations to pride by interior acts of humility; we must avoid speaking of ourselves, either well or ill, without sufficient cause; we must be silent when we are reproved; we must not seek to domineer in conversation, or to impose our own opinion upon others. In our bearing and manner we must avoid all affectation, immodesty, singularity, pretense, and, in a word, all that wounds humility.

APPLICATION.—Have we been careful in these things, which even common sense points out to us as necessary to obtain humility? It is true they are only negative means; but if we neglect them, all others will be useless.

AFFECTIONS.—Ask the grace to keep always present

to your mind the consciousness of your own nothingness and unworthiness, that so you may become truly humble.

RESOLUTIONS.—For this end, repeat often, after the example of a holy religious, some one of the following aspirations, “*Miserere mei, Deus! conspectu tuo indignissimus. Quid restat nobis nisi humilitas?*” “Have mercy on me, O God! I am unworthy to appear before Thee. What remains for us but to humble ourselves?”

POINT II

TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO PRACTICE HUMILITY

CONSIDERATION.—Moral virtues are never infused, like theological ones. We must acquire them for ourselves, and practice them diligently. Thus, it is a common saying, “There is no humility without humiliations.” What hinders us is a want of courage to deny ourselves in good earnest; and often our superiors dare not mortify us, lest they should only exasperate us. God, however, takes pity on us; and sends us humiliations, which are all the more salutary that they are not our own choice. Sometimes these take the form of mental sufferings, doubts, scruples, painful and humiliating temptations, which oblige us to seek help or consolation like simple novices; sometimes of sickness, weakness, disease, which incapacitates us from fulfilling our duties, and makes us useless to the community, when we had thought ourselves indispensable to it; sometimes it is a painful misunderstanding—the failure of our most anxious efforts—an undeserved reproof, when we have mistaken the meaning of some order of our superior’s, or when he has mistaken our motives; or again, it may be some cruel calumny which strikes at our reputation.

APPLICATION.— When God permits these things, it is only for our good, and to procure for us opportunities of aspiring to a high degree of humility. Let us profit by them. Far from complaining, or being cast down by them, let us say, with holy king David, “Bonum quia humiliasti me.” “It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me.” (Psalm 118:71.)

AFFECTIONS.— Beg earnestly for strength and courage to imitate David and many other holy men, by making good use of all humiliations.

RESOLUTIONS.— In all great trials, represent to yourself Jesus Christ, ruined in reputation, and dying between two known criminals.

POINT III

TO MAKE FREQUENT ACTS OF HUMILITY

CONSIDERATION.— The religious who really desires to advance in humility does not rest satisfied with the humiliations which God sends him, but makes many exterior and interior acts of humility during the day.

APPLICATION.— Let us do likewise. First, let us be exact in all acts of humility practiced in the community, and be careful to make them in a spirit of humility; then let us make ourselves familiar with interior acts, and the exterior ones will become easy to us, and sources of great consolation.

COLLOQUY with our Lord, from His example gaining courage to practice humility.

MEDITATION XIX

INTERVIEW OF JESUS WITH THE WOMAN
OF SAMARIA

HER CONVERSION AND ZEAL

1st Prel. Behold Jesus sitting down to rest by Jacob's well.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to sanctify both your fatigues and your recreations.

POINT I

WEARINESS OF JESUS

CONSIDERATION.— We read in the gospel that early in the first year of our Lord's public ministry, His holy precursor was cast into prison, where he afterward ended his life by martyrdom. The mission of Jesus was thenceforward more openly manifested. But, being persecuted in Judea, He determined to return to Galilee, passing through Samaria. It was a long and painful journey, and when He arrived at Sichar, a city of Samaria, "Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well. It was about the sixth hour." (St. John 4: 6.)

APPLICATION.— We too are often fatigued, exhausted, overcome, and so long for rest. What a consolation to think that our weariness resembles that of our Lord in being the result of works of charity for the glory of God and the salvation of souls! Such fatigues will merit for us a great increase of joy in heaven, while the weariness of worldly men is sterile and unprofitable. Let us sustain and encourage ourselves with these thoughts, and say with St. Austin, "Labor cum fine, merces sine fine." "The labor is short, the reward eternal."

AFFECTIONS.— Offer yourself to labor as long as strength remains to you, in the vineyard of the Lord. Pray for a brave and generous heart.

RESOLUTIONS.— To secure the merit of our labors, we should watch over ourselves, that our intention may be pure, and free from all taint of self-love.

POINT II

REPOSE OF JESUS

CONSIDERATION.— Jesus Christ, being, in all things like to us, was really fatigued, and really desired to rest when He sat down at Jacob's well. But He made a good use of His repose by entering into conversation with a poor sinful woman of Sichar who had come to draw water, which conversation proved her conversion, and that of many of her fellow-citizens.

APPLICATION.— We have here, in the person of our Divine Lord, the perfect model of a true religious, who ought to be always watchful, even in his hours of rest and recreation, for some means of furthering the glory of God and the good of souls, which are the true ends of his vocation. Have we not sometimes heard one of our brethren, after this example, relate some anecdote at recreation, or out walking, which tends to edify as well as to amuse, and thus often benefits not only the community, but any strangers who may happen to be present?

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for grace to sanctify your recreations by zeal and purity of intention.

RESOLUTIONS.— Like Blessed John Berchmanns, make for your own use a collection of examples of piety, and of interesting and edifying incidents.

POINT III

INDEFATIGABLE ZEAL OF JESUS

CONSIDERATION.— Observe with how much patience and dexterity our Blessed Lord leads the Samaritan woman to self-knowledge and repentance. First He takes occasion, from the water which she draws, to suggest a desire for the living waters of grace; then He desires her *to call hither her husband*, in order to make her acknowledge the licentiousness of her life; then, by reminding her of all she had done in her past life, He opens her eyes, and causes her to exclaim, “Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet.” (St. John 4: 19.) Then in answer to her questions, He reveals Himself to her as the promised Messiah. She recognizes her Saviour; from a sinner she becomes his devoted servant. She hastens to the town, and brings the inhabitants in crowds to the feet of Jesus.

APPLICATION.— Has not God dealt thus with ourselves? Has He not led us, by gentle steps, to the knowledge of ourselves, of the vanities of the world, and then on further to the love and practice of the evangelical counsels? Let us thank Him for this, and deal in a like manner with those intrusted to our charge. Often we fail from indiscreet zeal and overhaste, instead of waiting for a favorable opportunity.

COLLOQUY with the Saint whose name we bear, or with the Patron Saint of the month.

MEDITATION XX

FAITH OF THE INHABITANTS OF SICHAR

MISSION OF GALILEE *

1st Prel. Behold Jesus saying, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." (St. John 4: 34.)

2d Prel. Ask for grace to know and do in all things the holy will of God.

POINT I

MYSTERIOUS FOOD OF JESUS

CONSIDERATION.— The Samaritan woman returned to the city, and said to the people, "Come, and see a man who has told me all things whatsoever I have done." The disciples meanwhile, having returned from their expedition to buy food, "prayed Him, saying, Rabbi, eat. But He said to them, I have meat to eat which you know not. My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, that I may perfect His work." (St. John 4: 29, 31, 32, 34.) "*Meus cibus est, ut faciam voluntatem ejus, qui misit me, ut perficiam opus ejus.*" (Perfect, that is, the work of creation, by the redemption and sanctification of mankind.)

APPLICATION.— Let us consider these words attentively; they will enable us to understand how eagerly Jesus desires our sanctification, more eagerly than a

* Galilee, to which allusion will be frequently made, comprehended the tribes of Naphthali, Dan, and Zabulon. Favorably situated between the Jordan, Phœnicia, the Lake of Tiberias, and the Mediterranean, it had gained wealth by trade, and had become populous. It was divided into *Lower Galilee*, near Lake Tiberias, called also the Sea of Galilee, and *Upper Galilee*, sometimes styled *the Galilee of the Gentiles*, because many Gentiles or idolaters had established themselves there.

Our Lord was called *the Galilean*, because He had been brought up at Nazareth, and also because Galilee was the scene of His first miracles.

famished man desires food. A brief reflection on what Jesus has done for ourselves in particular will still more convince us of this truth. We shall also learn that, in order to conform ourselves to the desires of Jesus Christ, we must try to ascertain what are the designs of God in our regard, and correspond faithfully therewith. We shall further learn that we can never show sufficient zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, and that hunger, thirst, weariness, or any other inconveniences are not for a moment to be compared with it. Have we anything approaching to this zeal?

AFFECTIONS.—Pray with ardent longing that you may be one of those of whom Christ says, “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice; for they shall have their fill.” (St. Matt. 5:6.)

RESOLUTIONS.—Consider how you have most failed in zeal, and remedy the fault as soon as possible.

POINT II

SOJOURN OF JESUS IN SICHAR

CONSIDERATION.—No sooner had the people of Sichar, yielding to the woman’s entreaty, seen and heard Jesus, than He so charmed them that “they desired Him that He would tarry there.” Our Blessed Lord granted their desire: “And He abode there two days. And many more believed in Him because of His own word; and they said to the woman, We now believe, not for thy saying; for we ourselves have heard Him, and know that This is indeed the Saviour of the world.” (St. John 4:40-42.)

APPLICATION.—What an honor for these Samaritans to have been the first to recognize Jesus as the *Saviour of the world!* What a blessed privilege to

have believed in Him, and found the treasures of faith and sanctifying grace — the pledge of eternal happiness! And all this was the fruit of a short visit and a few instructions.. To know Jesus is enough; and if we only knew Him, we could never offend Him.

AFFECTIONS. — Lord Jesus, teach me to know Thee. Speak to my heart. In flame it with Thy Love.

RESOLUTIONS.— Choose for spiritual reading, those books which treat of *the knowledge and the love of Christ*.

POINT III

MISSION OF JESUS IN GALILEE

CONSIDERATION.— Jesus went straight from Sichar to Galilee, to open a mission which, through the fame of its miracles, was to stir up the people, verify His teaching, extend His reputation, and serve as a model for all future missions. “He departed thence, and went into Galilee.” (St. John 4:43.) And He “began to preach, and to say, Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (St. Matt. 4:17.) “Repent, and believe the Gospel. . . . And the fame of Him was spread forthwith into all the country of Galilee.” (St. Mark 1:15, 28.)

APPLICATION.— If we are commissioned to teach others, let us seek to establish our reputation and win confidence, not by working miracles, which God does not require of us, but by the testimony of a blameless life, and let us, like our Divine Master, make the fundamental truths of religion our ordinary subjects of instruction.

COLLOQUY with Jesus, our Divine Model and Saviour.

MEDITATION XXI

MIRACULOUS CURE

OF THE RULER'S SON AT CAPHARNAUM

1st Prel. Behold an afflicted father kneeling at Jesus' feet.

2d Prel. Ask for unbounded confidence in the mercy and goodness of God.

POINT I

AN AFFLICTED FATHER APPEALS TO JESUS

CONSIDERATION.—The first miracle by which our Blessed Lord proved His Divine mission, and inspired men with faith in Him, was performed for the consolation of an afflicted father, a man of high rank, and well known in Galilee. St. John thus records it: "There was a certain ruler, whose son was sick at Capharnaum. He having heard that Jesus was come . . . into Galilee, went to Him and prayed Him to come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death." (St. John 4: 46, 47.)

APPLICATION.—It was *sorrow* which brought this ruler to the knowledge of Jesus, and was the instrument of his salvation. We must not, therefore, look upon the afflictions sent us by God as evils, and complain of them, as perhaps we have been tempted to do. We may observe that this ruler delayed coming to Jesus till his son was at the last extremity. This was an error, which we must not imitate. We must not wait to ask God's help till we have exhausted all human means, and sought consolation in vain from creatures. If we act thus, is it surprising that God should delay to help us?

AFFECTIONS.—Praise and bless the Divine Wisdom,

which strikes to heal. Abandon yourself wholly to the care of Divine Providence.

RESOLUTIONS.—Accustom yourself to seek consolation first in God, and with filial confidence to await His help.

POINT II

JESUS REPROVES THE RULER

CONSIDERATION.—The ruler's hope of obtaining the cure of his son sprung from a very imperfect faith. He did not believe that Jesus could cure him from a distance. Our Blessed Lord therefore said to him, "Unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not." The afflicted father received this reproof with humility, and at the same time repeated his request with respectful confidence. "Lord, come down, before that my son die." These good dispositions obtained for him a more perfect faith, and also the favor that he requested. "Jesus saith to him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. The man believed the word which Jesus said to him, and went his way." (St. John 4: 48-50.)

APPLICATION.—Jesus treats us as He treated this ruler. If He seems to refuse what we ask, or to delay granting it, it is either to make us value it more, or to give us an opportunity of practicing patience, resignation, faith, and confidence. We must never weary of asking Him for what we want; He will grant it in the end.

AFFECTIONS.—Say fervently with the Apostles, "Lord, increase our faith." "Lord, teach us to pray." (St. Luke 17: 5, 11: 1.)

RESOLUTIONS.—Before and during prayer, I will strive to awaken in my heart sentiments of faith and of confidence in God.

POINT III

FAVORS GRANTED BY JESUS TO THE RULER

CONSIDERATION.—However firmly the poor father might believe the word of Jesus, we can easily imagine how eagerly he must have hurried over the fourteen leagues which separate Cana from Capharnaum, that he might see with his own eyes the fulfillment of it. The time must have seemed double its real length to him. But what must have been his joy when “his servants met him, and they brought him word, saying, that his son lived”! that “yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. The father therefore knew that it was at the same hour that Jesus said to him, Thy son liveth; and himself believed, and his whole house.” (St. John 4: 51–53.)

APPLICATION.—Oh! how good and liberal is our Divine Lord! He is not satisfied with granting a perfect cure to the child of this afflicted father; but He bestows on himself, on his son, and on all his household *the gift of faith*, as we may well believe, also that of final perseverance, and of eternal salvation! What ought not to be our love and gratitude to so generous a Benefactor!

COLLOQUY with Jesus. Beg of Him to grant you this grace.

MEDITATION XXII

SOJOURN OF JESUS AT CAPHARNAUM .

1st Prel. Behold Jesus preaching in the synagogue at Capharnaum.

2d Prel. Ask for a docile and obedient spirit.

POINT I

JESUS TAKES UP HIS ABODE AT CAPHARNAUM

CONSIDERATION.— After preaching for a few days at Cana, Jesus went to Capharnaum, where He fixed His residence,* rather than at Nazareth, or any other town in Galilee. This was probably because Capharnaum was the most populous town in Galilee, and also had more facilities of communication with the surrounding country and villages, on account of its position at the point where the river Jordan empties itself into the sea of Galilee or Tiberias. “Relicta civitate Nazareth, venit et habitavit in Capharnaum.” “Leaving the city Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capharnaum.” (St. Matt. 4:13.) It was, therefore, a place peculiarly suited for the preaching of the Gospel, and also for the exercise of the infinite charity of Jesus in works of mercy. The inhabitants greatly needed the display of such charity; for they were thoroughly corrupted by the riches and luxury which their extensive commerce had introduced amongst them.

APPLICATION.— The rule of those religious who by their institute are obliged to go wherever there are miseries to console or souls to save, binds them to an entire *indifference* for all places of abode, with the obligation, if a choice is left to them, of selecting that

* It is to this residence that the Apostles allude when they merely say, “He entered into the city.” “He returned to His house,” etc.

wherein they can do the most good, without regard to any personal feeling. This rule has been dictated by the example of our Lord Himself, and therefore commands our utmost reverence.

AFFECTIONS.—In the presence of God, declare yourself indifferent as to the place of your abode, and willing, if necessary, to traverse every country of the earth, were it but to gain a single soul.

RESOLUTIONS.—To guard against all natural attachments to particular places or dwellings.

POINT II

JESUS PREACHES IN THE SYNAGOGUE OF CAPHARNAUM

CONSIDERATION.—As soon as Jesus arrived at Capharnaum, “forthwith,” says the Evangelist, “upon the sabbath days going into synagogues, He taught them. And they were astonished at His doctrine. For He was teaching them as one having power, and not as the Scribes.” (St. Mark I: 21, 22.)

APPLICATION.—The words of Jesus made a very different impression on the people from the teaching of the Scribes, not only because He spoke as a Master and Law-giver, but because He practiced what He taught, and that every word and action spoke of forgetfulness of Himself, and zeal for His Father’s glory and salvation of souls. The Scribes, on the contrary, openly contradicted their teaching by their lives, and their whole conduct betrayed self-interest. Such a course can never produce any fruit in saving souls.

AFFECTIONS.—Let us pray that we may be free from self-love in our works of charity and zeal, in order that God may assist us in the same degree as we forget ourselves.

RESOLUTIONS.—Frequently renew your good intention by an ejaculatory prayer.

POINT III

JESUS DELIVERS ONE POSSESSED WITH A DEVIL

CONSIDERATION.—“And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, saying, What have we to do with Thee, Jesus of Nazareth? Art Thou come to destroy us? I know who Thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus threatened him, saying, Speak no more, and go out of the man. And the unclean spirit, tearing him, and crying out with a loud voice, went out of him. And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying What thing is this? What is this new doctrine? For with power He commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him? And the fame of Him was spread forthwith into all the country of Galilee.” (St. Mark 1: 23–28.)

APPLICATION.—We here see: 1st, the misery of one who by any sin, especially the sin of impurity, gives the devil possession of his heart; 2dly, how powerless is the fury of the devils against those who fly to Jesus for help; 3dly, how God brings good out of evil. All the rage of this unclean spirit turned only to the advantage of the Gospel, by raising the reputation of Jesus, and disposing persons to accept His teaching. Let us not, then, be scandalized at the evils which God permits the devil to work in the world; He will turn them to His own glory, and the good of His Church: of this we may be well assured.

COLLOQUY with Jesus in conformity with the preceding AFFECTIONS.

MEDITATION XXIII

JESUS IN THE HOUSE OF ST. PETER

CURE OF THE APOSTLE'S MOTHER-IN-LAW

1st Prel. Behold Jesus raising up the mother-in-law of Simon Peter from a bed of sickness.

2d Prel. Ask, through the love of Jesus, the grace to imitate Him in every thing; to be of one heart and one mind with Him.

POINT I

JESUS DWELLS IN THE HOUSE OF SIMON PETER

CONSIDERATION.— After the striking miracle which Jesus had worked in Capharnaum, and which had won Him universal admiration, He might have reckoned on an honorable reception from any of the richest and noblest families in the town. But He had no thought of this; for we read that, “immediately going out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John;” thus voluntarily making choice of a poor and humble abode. He was also actuated by a motive of charity; for “Simon’s wife’s mother lay in a fit of fever.” (St. Mark 1: 29, 30.)

APPLICATION.— Do we, like our Divine Master, prefer to be meanly and poorly lodged? Do we choose rather to visit those whom we may benefit by our charity or zeal than those who would flatter our vanity by outward marks of respect, especially if we have just performed some public act of charity or generosity? Do we never visit others for self-indulgence, sensuality, or some still more unworthy motive? Let us ask ourselves these questions honestly.

AFFECTIONS.— Teach me, Lord, to despise all objects of worldly ambition, and to seek only Thee in all things.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will often examine the motives which influence my actions.

POINT II

JESUS CURES SIMON'S MOTHER-IN-LAW

CONSIDERATION.— As soon as Jesus had entered the house of Simon, where his wife's mother lay ill, " forthwith they tell Him of her. And coming to her, He lifted her up, taking her by her hand; and immediately the fever left her." (St. Mark 1: 30, 31.)

APPLICATION.— We learn from this passage of the holy gospel, first, that true charity always *takes the initiative*. The disciples did not wait for the sick woman to ask them; of their own accord they entreated their Master to work a miracle in her favor, as soon as He had set foot in the house. We also learn that intercession for the sick and suffering is very pleasing to God, and appeals forcibly to His Heart. The prayer of the disciples was at once granted; the sick woman was instantly cured. Let us, then, strive to anticipate the desires and necessities of our suffering brethren — our charity will not fail to be rewarded.

AFFECTIONS.— Let us cast ourselves at the feet of Jesus, and recommend to His mercy all who are in affliction, particularly the suffering members of our community.

RESOLUTIONS.— To renew within us the spirit of charity, that kind, patient, expansive, considerate, and generous charity, which St. Peter recommended so earnestly to the primitive Christians: " Brethren," says the Apostle, " before all things have a constant mutual charity among yourselves: for charity covereth a multitude of sins." (1. Peter 4: 7, 8.)

POINT III

JESUS RECEIVES A JUST RETURN OF GRATITUDE

CONSIDERATION.—As soon as the sick woman was cured, we read that, “immediately rising, she ministered to them.” (St. Luke 4: 39.) With what overflowing sentiments of love, joy, and gratitude she must have performed this duty of hospitality; *with what care and diligence!*

APPLICATION.—This poor woman’s eagerness to show her gratitude seems only right and natural to us. She owed Him her life, her health, the use of her limbs; what could be more natural than that she should employ them in the service of her Benefactor? It is true; but let us apply the same rule to ourselves. Do not we also owe to God our life, our health, all our bodily and mental powers? Are we not equally bound, in justice and gratitude, to use them for His greater glory, and that with the utmost fervor and diligence?

COLLOQUY with Jesus, our Divine Model and all-powerful Benefactor.

MEDITATION XXIV

JESUS INTERRUPTS HIS LABORS OF
CHARITY

FOR PRAYER

1st Prel. Behold Jesus retiring from the town into solitude, to give Himself to prayer.

2d Prel. Ask for the spirit of prayer, united to that of zeal and charity.

POINT I

JESUS TAKES COMPASSION ON ALL INFIRMITIES

CONSIDERATION.—“And when the sun was down,* all they that had any sick with divers diseases, brought them to Him. But He, laying His hands on every one of them, healed them.” (St. Luke 4:40.) Observe here the extreme goodness of our Divine Lord, who let all approach Him without difficulty or ceremony, and who never betrayed the smallest annoyance or impatience, either on account of the lateness of the hour, the pressure of the crowd, or His own weariness. He might have got rid of the people more quickly by curing them all at once; but He preferred laying His hands on each one separately, and addressing a few words of consolation to each. “*Singulis manus imponens.*”

APPLICATION.—Let us imitate our Divine Master

* “After sunset, they brought to Him,” etc. In order to understand this passage, we must remark that the obligation of resting on the Sabbath (Saturday) lasted from the previous evening until sunset on the day itself. But the Jews, led into error by the Pharisees, interpreted this too literally. Hence their objection to bringing the sick *before sunset* on the Sabbath, and hence also the reproaches, which, as we shall see hereafter, they frequently addressed to Jesus Christ on His healing the sick on the Sabbath-day.

in this conduct. It is most edifying to see a religious, a superior, always kind-hearted and cheerful, easily accessible to every one, and forgetting his own sufferings to minister to others. But this implies a degree of perfection which is not natural to man. Have we striven to acquire it? and with what success?

AFFECTIONS.— Express the wish and pray for grace to render yourself like to our Lord, according to the words of the Apostle, “*Prædestinavit conformes fieri imaginis Filii sui.*” “He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son.” (Rom. 8: 29.)

RESOLUTIONS.— To render ourselves accessible to all, that those who need our help may not have to watch for a favorable opportunity.

POINT II

JESUS RETIRES INTO SOLITUDE TO PRAY

CONSIDERATION.— “And rising very early,” says St. Mark, “going out, He went into a desert-place, and there He prayed.” (St. Mark 1: 35.) By this example our Blessed Lord teaches us, first, to escape from the sight of men after having performed any good action, to avoid the danger of vainglory; secondly, to recollect ourselves in retreat and solitude, after our works of charity, in order to avoid distractions; thirdly, to support work with prayer, choosing for the latter the earlier portion of the day, in order to draw down the blessing of God on our labors.

APPLICATION.— Let us ask ourselves solemnly before God how far we conform ourselves in this respect to the example of our Divine Master, and thus provide against our many temptations to vainglory and distractions of various kinds.

AFFECTIONS.— Thank God who has called you to

dwell in a religious institution, and in the observance of rules and practices which enable you to follow closely the example of our Divine Lord.

RESOLUTIONS.—Examine how far you have failed in the observance of these rules and practices. Resolve to be more exact henceforward.

POINT III

JESUS PASSES THROUGH GALILEE

CONSIDERATION.—No sooner had the people of Capharnaum discovered our Lord's place of retirement, than "the multitudes sought Him, and came unto Him; and they stayed Him; . . . to whom He said, To other cities also I must preach the kingdom of God; for therefore am I sent." (St. Luke 4:42, 43.) "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness, and every infirmity among the people. And His fame went throughout all Syria, . . . and much people followed him. (St. Matt. 4:23-25.)

APPLICATION.—We know not whether to admire most the untiring zeal of Jesus, or the eagerness and docility of the people. We must not only admire, but imitate. In our works of zeal and charity let us be generous, and know no limit within the bounds of possibility. This is our mission; a high and noble though arduous one. To succeed in it, we must be closely united with Him who has sent us. "For," He says, "without Me you can do nothing."

COLLOQUY with our Adorable Master, Jesus Christ.

MEDITATION XXV

OF THE DETACHMENT WHICH JESUS REQUIRES FROM US

1st Prel. Listen to Jesus Christ saying, "Every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth can not be my disciple." (St. Luke 14: 33.)

2d Prel. Ask for perfect detachment.

POINT I

DETACHMENT FROM THE RICHES AND HONORS OF THE WORLD

CONSIDERATION.— "A certain Scribe came and said" to Jesus, "Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou shalt go. And Jesus saith to him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." (St. Matt. 8: 19, 20.) Most interpreters are of opinion that this reply of Jesus, who sees the thoughts of the heart, implies that the Scribe expected to obtain riches and honor by following one already so high in public reputation. Being, however, undeceived by our Lord's profession of strict poverty, he drew back, having no desire to share it.

APPLICATION.— We are happier than the Scribe, inasmuch as we have received grace to renounce the world for a life of evangelical poverty and humility. But let us be on our guard; we have heard of religious who, being priests, have left the cloister for the sake of ecclesiastical dignities and honors; and of others who, being lay brothers, have quitted it in the hope of being elevated to the priesthood. History furnishes us with many such instances.

AFFECTIONS.— Ask grace to persevere to the end in the spirit of detachment and contempt of the world, and in the love of religious poverty and humility.

RESOLUTIONS.— To let no day pass without thanking God for the grace of your vocation, and praying for perseverance in the religious life.

POINT II

DETACHMENT FROM PARENTS

CONSIDERATION.— After the withdrawal of the Scribe, Jesus, looking with an eye of love upon one of His hearers, deigned to call him to the apostleship of which the Scribe was unworthy. He said to him, "Follow me." He was ready to give up everything for the sake of his vocation: he only asked leave to delay following it for a short time. "Lord," he said, "suffer me first to go and to bury my father." He wished to take care of his father during his old age, and not leave him till after his death. Our Lord refused his request, saying to him, "Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." (St. Luke 9: 59, 60.)

APPLICATION.— If your affection for your parents, or their opposition to your vocation, has not been a hinderance to you, be eternally grateful for this blessing; but be careful to avoid another snare into which many have fallen. Seeing their father or mother in distress and difficulty, they have been tempted to leave their order for the sake of consoling or supporting them, often only to become a burden to their parents, and a prey to bitter regret, remorse, or despair.

AFFECTIONS.— "From the snares of the devil, deliver us, O Lord!" (Litany.)

RESOLUTIONS.— Daily recommend to God your parents, whether living or dead, and be sure that the

more you detach yourself from them in order to serve God, the greater mercy will He show to them.

POINT III

DETACHMENT FROM RELATIONS AND FRIENDS

CONSIDERATION.— St. Luke mentions another who also desired to delay obeying our Lord's call. "I will follow Thee, Lord," he said; "but let me first take my leave of them that are at my house. Jesus said to him: No man putting his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (St. Luke 9: 61, 62.)

APPLICATION.— In these words our Blessed Lord teaches us that those who, like ourselves, have left all to follow Him in the way of perfection, must not occupy themselves with the temporal interests of their relations or friends, but think only of advancing daily toward the end of their holy vocation.

COLLOQUY with your Angel Guardian, who, although so intimately connected with your life, is still perfectly detached from the world and from all its charms and allurements.

MEDITATION XXVI

JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES

OVERTAKEN BY A TEMPEST

1st Prel. Behold the boat of Peter, tossed by the waves and in danger of sinking, while Jesus sleeps in it.

2d Prel. Ask for unshaken confidence in Divine Providence.

POINT I

SLEEP OF JESUS: TERROR OF THE DISCIPLES

CONSIDERATION.—“And He saith to them that day, when evening was come, Let us pass over to the other side.” (St. Mark 4: 35.) “And when He entered into the boat, His disciples followed Him. And behold, a great tempest arose in the sea, so that the boat was covered with waves; but He was asleep.”* (St. Matt. 8: 23, 24.)

APPLICATION.—Two things especially strike us in this event, recorded so minutely by three Evangelists: 1st, that the tempest threatened to shipwreck them, in spite of our Lord’s presence; and 2dly, that He slept calmly during the storm. From these facts we may draw two practical conclusions: 1st, that it is a great mistake to suppose ourselves abandoned by God because we are exposed to violent temptations or frightful persecutions; and 2dly, that it is equally wrong to give way to fear, as though our Divine Lord were not with us, and watching over us to shield us from harm.

* The sleep of Jesus was real, but although the faculties of the senses were suspended in His case as in that of ordinary men, He did not in sleep lose the powers of His mind, nor did He become unconscious of what took place. Our Divine Lord might say literally of Himself, “I sleep, and my heart watcheth.” (Cant. 5: 2.)

AFFECTIONS.— Let us ask pardon for our cowardice and our causeless terrors.

RESOLUTIONS.— When the waves of our irregular passions rise up around us, or when we find ourselves threatened with persecution, let us cast ourselves on the bosom of Divine Providence. There we shall find that rest of which the pillow on which Jesus slept is the figure. “*Erat in puppi, super cervical dormiens.*” “He was in the hinder part of the ship, sleeping upon a pillow,” says St. Mark. (St. Mark 4:38.)

POINT II

THE DISCIPLES APPEAL TO JESUS

CONSIDERATION.— The disciples, finding all their efforts to save the boat useless, “came to Him and awaked Him, saying, Lord, save us; we perish.” (St. Matt. 8:25.) “Master, doth it not concern Thee that we perish?” (St. Mark 4:38.) “And Jesus saith to them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?” (St. Matt. 8:26.) He did not find fault with them for awaking Him from sleep, but for having doubted His care for them, and thought Him powerless to help them while He was asleep.

APPLICATION.— Let us fly to Jesus in every danger, as the disciples did; but let us not, like them, delay till we are at the last extremity; and especially let us beware of any want of faith or confidence, any doubt of His Divine Providence, because, for our greater good, He may seem to sleep, and to be deaf to our prayers, while He is only delaying to grant them.

AFFECTIONS.— Acts of steadfast confidence in the goodness and paternal Providence of God, manifested specially toward those who have consecrated themselves by vow to His service.

RESOLUTIONS.— When tempted to distrust, say with David, “*Dominus regit me, et nihil mihi deerit.*”

"The Lord ruleth me, and I shall want nothing."
(Ps. 22: 1.)

POINT III

THE DISCIPLES REPROVED: THE TEMPEST CALMED

CONSIDERATION.—Jesus, who had only permitted this storm to arise that He might show His Divine power, and strengthen the confidence of His disciples, quelled it with a single word: "Rising up, He rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, Peace; be still. And the wind ceased, and there was made a great calm. . . . And they feared exceedingly; and they said one to another, Who is this, thinkest thou, that both wind and sea obey Him?" (St. Mark 4: 39, 40.)

APPLICATION.—Both the majesty and the almighty power of our Divine Lord are here manifested in the most striking manner. Which of us does not feel proud and happy to belong to Him — to be allowed to fight under His standard? Let us thank Him for having called us to this great privilege, and offer ourselves anew to Him unreservedly and courageously.

COLLOQUY with our Lord in continuation of the above.

MEDITATION XXVII

CONTINUATION OF THE SAME SUBJECT

1st *Prel.* Behold the disciples in the boat, struggling with the tempest.

2d *Prel.* Ask for wisdom to read the designs of God for his Church and for souls.

POINT I

THE BARK OF PETER A TYPE OF THE CHURCH

CONSIDERATION.— The bark of Peter is a type of the Church. As it was exposed during the whole night to the fury of the winds and waves, so the Church is exposed to the fury of the devil and his satellites, and will be so exposed till the end of the world, during the *night*—that is to say, till the dim light of faith is exchanged for the full glory of the Beatific Vision. And as the boat seemed often in danger of being wrecked, so has the Church often appeared to be on the point of destruction. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, her fall was predicted with the greatest confidence by unbelievers. But Jesus was asleep in the ship. It could not perish. At the moment appointed by His Divine wisdom, He awoke, and rebuked the tempest, and there was a great calm. And so it will ever be; always attacked and threatened with shipwreck, but always victorious, the Church will pursue her way across the stormy sea of this world, till she enters the haven of her eternal rest.

APPLICATION.— We must therefore not be disturbed or scandalized when we see our holy Mother the Church persecuted, oppressed, and despoiled by impious men. St. Austin says that God wills that it should be so: 1st, that all the world may see that the Church is a divine and not a human institution; 2dly, that she

may be like her Divine Founder, who "ought . . . to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory," (St. Luke 24:26;) 3dly, lest calm and prosperity should cause relaxation and corruptions; 4thly, that being constantly harassed by her enemies, and purified in the fire of tribulation, she may always retain her primitive strength and beauty.

AFFECTIONS.—Praise, bless, and adore the depth and the wisdom of the counsels of God with regard to His Church. Pray earnestly that this Holy Church may triumph, and that it may extend over the whole world.

RESOLUTIONS.—During the tribulation of the Church, we should imitate the conduct of the disciples, and combine with human efforts prayer and constant appeals to our Divine Master that He may command and still the winds and the storms.

POINT II

THE BARK OF PETER A TYPE OF THE FAITHFUL SOUL

CONSIDERATION.—The ship containing the disciples, and Jesus with them, is also, according to St. Austin, a type of the faithful soul. She too is always exposed in this world to storms and tempests, and is never at rest. There is neither time nor place, says Thomas à Kempis, that can shelter you from the storms of temptation. When you think yourselves most secure, when Jesus is nearest to you — as after a Retreat or a fervent Communion — you will be suddenly overwhelmed with scruples, disgusts, impure imaginations, and all manner of horrible temptations, which, like a raging sea, will threaten to engulf you. But Jesus, who has permitted the storm for your spiritual good, has also defined its limits. At His command, peace and serenity will return when you least expect it,

making you feel with redoubled confidence that the Lord is sweet. The lives of the Saints are full of these alternations of storm and calm, consolation and desolation.

APPLICATION.— Practical conclusions: 1st, never reckon on perfect peace and serenity; 2dly, be always prepared for a violent storm; 3dly, in times of desolation, and even of the fiercest temptation, never for a moment lose confidence in Jesus Christ; 4thly, beware of changing any of your resolutions at such times; 5thly, wake Jesus—appeal to Him for help, as the disciples did; 6thly, when the storm is over, examine your behavior during it—how far you have acted upon these rules and the advice of your spiritual directors, and make resolutions accordingly.

COLLOQUY with our Divine Saviour. Ask Him to shed upon us the bright light of faith, and to enable us to understand His mysterious dealing with His Church, that we may enlighten others and confirm them in the faith. Let us ask also the grace to act always in conformity with the practical conclusions indicated in the second Point.

MEDITATION XXVIII

JESUS AMONG THE GERASENS:

HEALING OF THE DEMONIACS

1st Prel. Behold the demoniac at the feet of Jesus, and our Lord saying, "Go out of the man, thou unclean spirit." (St. Mark 5:8.)

2d Prel. Ask for the grace of perfect chastity.

POINT I

MISERY OF A GERASEN POSSESSED BY AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT

CONSIDERATION. — Having shown that all nature and the elements were subject to Him, Jesus wished to show that evil spirits were equally so. An opportunity soon occurred. Scarcely had He landed in the county of the Gerasens than two men possessed with devils cast themselves at His feet. Of one of these St. Mark says expressly that he had "an unclean spirit." His case was a most miserable one. It would seem that in describing it the Evangelist desires to set before us the misery of any one, religious or secular, who is a slave to the vice or devil of impurity. "No man now could bind him, even with chains; for, having often been bound with fetters and chains, he had burst the chains." (St. Mark 5:3, 4.) He was "exceeding fierce, so that none could pass by that way." (St. Matt. 8:28.) When asked his name, he replied, "My name is Legion, for we are many." "And he was always day and night in the monuments and in the mountains, crying, and cutting himself with stones." (St. Mark 5:9, 5.)

APPLICATION. — We here see the wretched condition of the impure man. Mad with passion, nothing can control or restrain him; he cares neither for his reputation, his health, or his religious vows; he is insensible

to the horror of sacrilege, and to the fear of judgment and hell; he seizes upon others, either for his accomplices or victims, so that it is dangerous to go near him, or hold intercourse with him. Legion is the true name for the vice of impurity; for it always draws an infinity of other vices after it. Finally, the nakedness, the savage wanderings, and the wild howlings of the demoniac bear witness to the description given by the Holy Ghost: "Man, when he was in honor, did not understand; he is compared to senseless beasts, and is become like to them." (Psalm 48:13.) Isolating himself from the world, lamenting his condition, a burden to himself, he can not, because he will not, give up sin.

AFFECTIONS.—Return unceasing thanks to God for having preserved you from the dominion of the spirit of impurity, or should you at any time have yielded to its power, for having rescued you therefrom. Recommend yourself to Jesus and Mary, that you may never be the victim of fatal illusions or of false security.

RESOLUTIONS.—Whatever may be our age or state, we should live in constant distrust of ourselves.

POINT II

JOY OF THE GERASEN AFTER HIS DELIVERANCE

CONSIDERATION.—Jesus, being touched with compassion at so fearful a sight, said, in a loud voice, "Go out of the man, thou unclean spirit." The devils, thus driven out, asked leave to enter a herd of swine which was feeding near. "And Jesus immediately gave them leave.* . . . And the herd with great violence was carried headlong into the sea, being about two thousand, and were stifled in the sea." (St. Mark 5:8, 13.) At the same moment the demoniac was

* Either in order to prove that all things are in His hands, or else to punish the scandal given by the Gerasens, or, in fine, to show that the demon has no power over us, or over those things which belong to us, except in so far as God permits it.

suddenly changed, and became as quiet and gentle as a lamb. The people, who had assembled in crowds at the report of this miracle, were astonished to see "him that was troubled with the devil, sitting, clothed, and well in his wits." (St. Mark 5: 15.) He meanwhile, not knowing how sufficiently to express his gratitude, "began to beseech" Jesus "that he might be with Him" as His disciple. But Jesus, satisfied with his good intention, "admitted him not, but saith to him, Go into thy house, to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee. . . . And he went his way, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him. And all men wondered." (St. Mark 5: 18-20.)

APPLICATION.—Let us frequently meditate on all that Jesus has done for us, and show our gratitude by proclaiming His mercies.

AFFECTIONS.—"Let my mouth be filled with praise that I may sing Thy glory." (Psalm 70: 8.)

RESOLUTIONS.—Frequently excite yourself to sentiments of humble gratitude, saying with the Apostle, "By the grace of God, I am what I am." (1. Cor. 15: 10.)

POINT III

BLINDNESS OF THE GERASENS

CONSIDERATION.—The Gerasens, when they saw what was done, and that they had lost their herd of swine, came to Jesus, and "besought Him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear." Jesus punished their selfishness and stupidity by granting their prayer. "He going up into the ship, returned back again." (St. Luke 8: 37.)

APPLICATION.—Let us thank God that we are saved by the vow of poverty from the temptations of avarice, and detach ourselves still more perfectly from all that is not God and does not lead to Him.

COLLOQUY with the Saint whose feast occurs to-day.

MEDITATION XXIX

RETURN OF JESUS TO CAPHARNAUM

CURE OF A PARALYTIC

1st Prel. Behold the paralytic carried in his bed to Jesus.
2d Prel. Ask for such faith and confidence as he had.

POINT I

ACTIVE FAITH OF THE PARALYTIC

CONSIDERATION.—The joy of the inhabitants of Capharnaum at the return of Jesus compensated for the insult offered Him by the Gerasens. As soon as it became known that He was in the house, the crowd increased around it till it was almost impossible for any one to get near, and especially for those who were carrying the sick. We read that four men brought one who was sick of the palsy. “And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in, because of the multitude, they went up upon the roof, and let him down through the tiles with his bed into the midst before Jesus.” (St. Luke 5: 19.)

APPLICATION.—This ingenious expedient strikes us with admiration at its singularity, boldness, and promptitude. It was most pleasing to our Divine Lord, and was immediately crowned with success. But what caused the great eagerness of the paralytic? His desire to be cured of his disease. “Ah! if we only felt the diseases of the soul as we do those of the body,” says the holy author of the *Imitation*, “we should find plenty of bold and persevering expedients to remedy them.” And our efforts would be successful. We should get rid of that spiritual paralysis

which hinders us, perhaps for years, from making any progress, and which threatens to become incurable.

AFFECTIONS.—Pray for grace to become fully conscious of your spiritual needs, that you may remedy them promptly and energetically.

RESOLUTIONS.—To carry out without delay the good intentions with which God inspires you.

POINT II

SPIRITUAL CURE OF THE PARALYTIC

CONSIDERATION.—“Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the man sick of the palsy, Be of good heart, son; thy sins are forgiven thee.” (St. Matt. 9: 12.) He had sought only the cure of his bodily disease, and he receives also that of his soul. Jesus excites in his heart a true contrition for his sins, and grants him a full remission of them. And this He does before curing his palsy, to show that His chief end in coming into the world was to save souls, and to remind us that we should be infinitely more solicitous about the sanctification of our soul than the health of our body.

APPLICATION.—In spite of this lesson, most men live as though they had no soul to save. Is it so with us in any degree? Are our *first thoughts*, on waking in the morning, for our soul or our body? How often in the day do we think of the one in comparison with the other? And do we not much more often speak of our bodily ailments, and the remedies that might relieve them, than of our spiritual miseries and the means of curing them? Do we not also sometimes indulge our body to the detriment of our soul?

AFFECTIONS.—Acknowledge, lament, and detest your fatal blindness on this point.

RESOLUTIONS.—When repeating the words, “Give us this day our daily bread,” I will reflect on **the**

necessities of my soul, and resolve that these, above all else, shall be the objects of my solicitude.

POINT III

BODILY CURE OF THE PARALYTIC

CONSIDERATION.— The spiritual cure of the paralytic was immediately followed by the healing of his bodily disease. By this cure, so evidently miraculous, Jesus desired to prove to the Scribes and Pharisees that He was really God, and really had power to forgive sins, which the Scribes disputed. For this reason He said, "That you may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then said He to the man sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house. And he arose, and went into his house." (St. Matt. 9: 6, 7.)

APPLICATION.— "And the multitude seeing it," says the Evangelist, "feared and glorified God, that gave such power to men." (St. Matt. 9: 8.) Let us unite with them in praising God, who has committed to His priests the power to absolve our sins.

COLLOQUY with our Lord in conformity with the preceding **AFFECTIONS** and **RESOLUTIONS**.

MEDITATION XXX

THE VOCATION OF ST. MATTHEW

1st Prel. Behold Jesus saying to Matthew, "Follow me." (St. Matt. 9:9.)

2d Prel. Ask for grace to correspond faithfully with your holy vocation.

POINT I

THE WONDERFUL VOCATION OF ST. MATTHEW

CONSIDERATION.— When Jesus was leaving Capharnaum, "passing by, He saw Levi, the son of Alphaeus, sitting at the receipt of custom, and He saith to him, Follow me." (St. Mark 2:14.) This was, in every respect, a remarkable vocation. First, the person called was a publican or tax-gatherer; this was an employment odious in the sight of the people, on account of the facilities it afforded for those who followed it to enrich themselves by fraudulent practices. Next, he was called while actually employed in making up his accounts. Finally, it was, as we might say, a *passing call*, consisting only of one look, one word — "Follow me."

APPLICATION.— We shall, perhaps, find some similar circumstances in our own vocation. For instance, why should God have called us in preference to so many others more worthy of so great a privilege? It may be, too, that His call came when we were harboring some passion or unworthy purpose. If so, how grateful ought we to be for so signal a mercy!

AFFECTIONS.— Call on your Guardian Angel and your holy Patrons to join you in praising and thanking the Lord your God.

RESOLUTIONS.— During times of spiritual trial, I will reflect on the wonderful grace manifested to me in my religious vocation.

POINT II

PROMPT OBEDIENCE OF ST. MATTHEW

CONSIDERATION.—The readiness and fidelity of St. Matthew in corresponding with his vocation are no less admirable than his vocation itself. As soon as he heard the words of Jesus, “he rose up and followed Him.” (St. Matt. 9:9.) Julian the Apostate declared that this was either a false account, or an act of madness. And, indeed, it can not be explained, except by the miraculous operations of Divine grace, which *in one moment* can change a sensual and avaricious man into a spiritual and mortified one. The world has often witnessed such miracles of grace; but it does not understand them, because it has no faith, and faith is necessary for their comprehension. Blessed are they who not only understand, but have experienced them.

APPLICATION.—Are not we ourselves among these latter? Have we not received many graces independently or even in spite of ourselves? How often, when we were resisting grace, and thinking only of the world and ourselves, its powerful attraction compelled us to see the nothingness of all that is not God, that is not eternal, and urged us to follow the evangelical counsel, “Follow me,” in the way of voluntary poverty!

AFFECTIONS.—I will rejoice with the Blessed Virgin, remembering the great things that grace has accomplished in me: “Fecit mihi magna, qui potens est!” “He that is mighty hath done great things to me.”

RESOLUTIONS.—When tempted to discouragement, I will consider how much I may accomplish with the aid of Divine grace.

POINT III

THE STRIKING GRATITUDE OF ST. MATTHEW

CONSIDERATION.—Illuminated by grace, St. Matthew now understood the real value of his vocation, and was anxious to prove his gratitude for it before both God and man. He invited Jesus to a magnificent banquet “in his own house,” which our Lord was pleased to accept. St. Mark tells us that “many publicans and sinners sat down together with Jesus and His disciples.” (St. Mark 2:15.) The new convert had invited them in the hope of bringing them also to the feet of Jesus, perhaps even of persuading some of them to embrace, like himself, a life of voluntary poverty. He thus gave a double proof of his gratitude.

APPLICATION.—Let us imitate the gratitude of St. Matthew by seizing every opportunity of bringing men to God, and, if possible, of inspiring them with a love and desire for the religious life.

COLLOQUY with the newly-elected Apostle of our Lord. Congratulate him. Beg of him to obtain for you generosity of heart, ardent love for Christ, and esteem for the religious state.

MEDITATION XXXI

OF THE EXCELLENCE OF OUR VOCATION

1st Prel. Let us imagine Jesus Christ saying to us, "You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." (St. John 15:16.)
2d Prel. Let us ask grace to correspond perfectly with our vocation.

There are three special proofs of the excellence of our vocation.

POINT I

THE ORIGIN OF OUR VOCATION

CONSIDERATION.— One may say, or rather one ought to say, that the origin of our vocation is divine. The thought of leaving parents, fortunes, pleasures, liberty, in a word, all that is dearest to the heart of man, to embrace a life of mortification and self-sacrifice, could never have come from ourselves; it is so contrary to all our natural inclinations. Neither could it have come from the world, which looks upon it as folly and madness; and still less from the devil, who hates it. It could therefore only have come from God. As our Blessed Lord Himself says, "You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." And again, "All men take not this word," (of perfect continency,) "but they to whom it is given." (St. Matt. 19:11.)

APPLICATION.— Our vocation, then, comes straight from heaven, from God. If we keep this in mind, all our thoughts and actions will also be heavenly, great, noble, and generous. We shall never degenerate into a certain type of religious, who are so narrow-minded that they are always occupied with thoughts of their own reputation, their own health, their own comfort;

always taken up with themselves, and thus rendered incapable of any heroic sacrifice.

AFFECTIONS.—“Non degeneremus ab excelsis cogitationibus filiorum Dei.” “Permit not, O Lord! that we should ever fall away from the noble aspirations of the children of God.” (B. Azeredo.)

RESOLUTIONS.—To guard against an imperceptible falling off in the practice of piety.

POINT II

THE END OF OUR VOCATION

CONSIDERATION.—For what end have we entered religion? To escape the dangers and seductions of the world; to avoid offending God; to secure our eternal salvation; to attain a high degree of glory and happiness in heaven, by a close conformity with Jesus Christ through the practice of the evangelical counsels; to suffer our purgatory in this world; in a word, to become saints.

APPLICATION.—Do we often recall these thoughts, as St. Bernard did, who said to himself every morning on first waking, “Bernard, Bernard, wherefore didst thou come hither?” By so doing we shall, like him, constantly renew our fervor, and speedily arrive at a high degree of perfection.

AFFECTIONS.—I will beg of God the grace to comprehend daily more and more the excellence of my religious vocation.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will strive while I live to adhere to the practice which proved so useful to St. Bernard, that of recalling to mind, on awaking each morning, the reasons which induced me to renounce the world.

POINT III

THE REWARDS PROMISED TO OUR VOCATION

CONSIDERATION.— We may still better appreciate the excellence of our vocation, if we consider the promises which our Divine Lord has attached to it. They surpass in magnificence those which are attached to any other good works; from whence we may conclude that in His sight the religious life surpasses every other in excellence. “There is no man,” He says, “that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God’s sake, who shall not receive much more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.” (St. Luke 18:29. 30.)

APPLICATION.— Behold here a powerful motive to love and esteem our holy vocation, and an incitement to perseverance which should make us eager to surmount all difficulties; for should we not be ashamed to let those who labor only for a temporal reward surpass us in courage and generosity?

COLLOQUY with the Most Holy Virgin, to whom, after God, we are indebted for the grace of our holy and happy vocation.

MEDITATION XXXII

THE RAISING OF JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER

1st *Prel.* Behold Jesus taking the daughter of Jairus by the hand, and raising her to life.

2d *Prel.* Ask for great faith and confidence in prayer.

POINT I

THE PRAYER OF JAIRUS

CONSIDERATION.—The day following the vocation of St. Matthew, “there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue named Jairus; and seeing Him, falleth down at His feet. And he besought Him much, saying, My daughter is at the point of death: Come, lay Thy hand upon her, that she may be safe, and may live.” (St. Mark 5:22, 23.) This prayer was so pleasing to Jesus that it obtained several miracles. Let us therefore consider its qualities for our own profit. 1st, it was *humble* and *reverent*, as both the words and the manner of the suppliant show; 2d, it was *earnest* and *pleading*, coming from the heart of an afflicted father; 3d, it was *simple* and *childlike*; Jairus makes his request without any superfluous words, and trusts it to the mercy of Jesus, to the tenderness of His Heart.

APPLICATION.—Do our prayers always breathe this humility, this exterior and interior reverence so due to the majesty of God? Are they earnest, coming from hearts which feel their misery, and know that they can not remedy it for themselves? Are they not often wanting in confidence and simplicity? Perhaps in answering these questions we shall find out why our prayers seem so often to be unavailing.

AFFECTIONS.—“Domine, doce nos orare.” “Lord, teach us to pray.” (St. Luke 11:1.)

RESOLUTIONS.—Consider what has hitherto been the defect in your prayers, and resolve to remedy it.

POINT II

THE FAITH OF JAIRUS

CONSIDERATION.—As Jairus returned to his house, followed by Jesus, who had *immediately* granted his prayer, “some come from the ruler of the synagogue’s house, saying, Thy daughter is dead; why dost thou trouble the Master any farther?” (St. Mark 5:35.) But Jairus, instead of giving way to despair, turned to Jesus, and said, “Lord, my daughter is even now dead; but come, lay Thy hands upon her, and she shall live.” (St. Matt. 9:18.) And Jesus answered, “Fear not; believe only, and she shall be safe.” (St. Luke 8:50.) In this touching history we hardly know whether most to admire the faith of Jairus, or the promptitude of our Blessed Lord in recompensing it.

APPLICATION.—Let us not only admire but imitate the faith and confidence of this Jewish ruler, or rather the *constancy* of his faith; for this is where we so often fall: the least difficulty discourages us, whereas the confidence of Jairus only increased where ours would be shaken. Let us also imitate the promptitude of Jesus in granting the request of Jairus, and render *at once* any service that is demanded of us. “Bis dat, qui cito dat.” “He who gives quickly gives doubly,” says the proverb. We lose all the merit of our good actions if we perform them grudgingly.

AFFECTIONS.—Pray for an increase of faith and fraternal charity.

RESOLUTIONS.—Frequently repeat the prayer of the

Apostles, "Domine, adauge nobis fidem." "Lord, increase our faith." (St. Luke 17: 5.)

POINT III

THE MIRACLE GRANTED TO THE FAITH AND PRAYER OF JAIRUS

CONSIDERATION.—"When He was come to the house," . . . He went in, and "taking her by the hand, cried out, saying, Maid, arise. And her spirit returned, and she rose immediately. And He bid them give her to eat. And her parents were astonished." (St. Luke 8: 51, 54, 55.)

APPLICATION.—"And the fame hereof went abroad into all that country," adds St. Matthew. And no wonder; for what miracle could cause a greater sensation than the raising of a dead person to life? And yet, says St. Bernard, the resurrection, or the solid and lasting conversion, of an inveterate sinner, is a still greater miracle. If God has worked this miracle for us, what gratitude do we not owe Him? But there is one miracle still greater, adds the same holy doctor — namely, the resurrection or real conversion of a degenerate religious from a state of tepidity to one of fervor. If such a miracle is needed in our case, let us not despair of obtaining it: all things are possible to the prayer of faith.

COLLOQUY with our good Angel, who sees the many favors which, notwithstanding our unworthiness, we receive from the hand of God.

MEDITATION XXXIII

THREE MIRACULOUS CURES

1st Prel. Behold Jesus surrounded by the sick and suffering.

2d Prel. Ask for grace to increase in the knowledge and love of Jesus.

POINT I

MIRACULOUS CURE OF THE WOMAN WITH AN ISSUE OF BLOOD

CONSIDERATION.— On the same day that He raised Jairus's daughter to life, Jesus performed three other miraculous cures. The first was that of a woman diseased with an issue of blood for twelve years, who, "when she had heard of Jesus, came in the crowd behind Him, and touched His garment; for she said, If I shall touch but His garment, I shall be whole. And forthwith . . . she felt in her body that she was healed of the evil." (St. Mark 5: 27-29.) We must allow that the means employed by this poor woman were not such as human wisdom would have suggested. Perhaps she hesitated herself before using them; she did it, however, in obedience to a Divine inspiration.

APPLICATION.— It is a great mistake to give up the execution of any pious intention because certain objections occur to our mind. "It will often happen," says the author of the *Spiritual Exercises*, "that, after framing some pious intention, you will be tempted to abandon it; it will seem to you strange, compromising, dictated by vanity, too difficult, or even impossible. These are snares of the devil; despise them, and go steadily forward." It is not by following the dictates of human wisdom that we shall obtain miracles.

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for grace to be guided in all

things by the Spirit of God, in preference, if necessary, to the counsels of human wisdom.

RESOLUTIONS.— Be steadfast in carrying out your good intentions.

POINT II

MIRACULOUS CURE OF TWO BLIND MEN

CONSIDERATION.—“ And as Jesus passed from thence, there followed Him two blind men, crying out and saying, Have mercy on us, O Son of David! And when He was come to the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus saith to them, Do you believe that I can do this unto you? They say to Him, Yea, Lord. Then He touched their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it done unto you. And their eyes were opened.” (St. Matt. 9: 27–30.)

APPLICATION.— After the example of these blind men, let us seize every opportunity of obtaining graces and favor from God. Let us persevere in our supplications, though they may at first seem unavailing; and above all, let us make frequent acts of faith in the power and goodness of our Divine Saviour. He would seem to make this faith the condition and the measure of His gifts. “ According to your faith be it done unto you.”

AFFECTIONS.— Ask for the true spirit of prayer.

RESOLUTIONS.— Always endeavor to recite devoutly the prayer of the two blind men used in our Litanies: “ Kyrie, eleison imas.” “ Lord, have mercy on us.”

POINT III

MIRACULOUS CURE OF A DUMB DEMONIAK

CONSIDERATION.—No sooner had Jesus cured the two blind men, than “they brought Him a dumb man possessed with a devil.” (St. Matt. 9: 32.) He was suffering from a double affliction, and the more to be pitied as he was unable to solicit aid for himself. Happily, other charitable persons did this for him. The Heart of Jesus was touched with compassion; without even waiting to be asked, He commanded the devil to release his prey; and immediately “the dumb man spoke.” (St. Matt. 9: 33.)

APPLICATION.—How pitiable is the state of those whom the devil makes dumb in the confessional—dumb in prayer; dumb when duty or charity requires them to speak! Let us take compassion on their misery, and try to help them. Especially let us imitate the readiness of Jesus to come forward to the assistance of those who are hindered by a natural reserve, or any other motive, from asking our help.

COLLOQUY with the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, whose festival we celebrate this month. Beg of them earnestly to obtain for us the grace to become, like them, faithful and perfect followers of Christ; calling to mind the words of the latter, “*Rogo ergo vos, imitatores mei estote, sicut et ego Christi.*” “Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ.” (I. Cor. 4: 16.)

MEDITATIONS FOR THE FIRST FRIDAY IN
EVERY MONTH

(From the Novena of the Sacred Heart, p. 423.)

January

ON DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART

1st Prel. Behold Jesus shewing you His Heart, and saying,
"This is the Heart which has loved men so much."*2d Prel.* Ask for a true and loving devotion to the Sacred Heart.

POINT I

OBJECT OF THIS DEVOTION

CONSIDERATION.—The material or sensible object of this devotion is the Heart of the Incarnate Word, inseparably united to His Humanity and His Divinity; as truly an object of worship as Jesus Christ Himself, with whom it is identified.

The spiritual or abstract object is the love of Jesus Christ, of which His Heart is the symbol. In every sense, therefore, the object of this devotion is the noblest and most excellent that can be imagined. It is the Heart of a God who loves us; it is Jesus Christ Himself, represented by the most noble organ of His Humanity, and the most glorious attribute of His Divinity — His Love.

APPLICATION.—These considerations will enkindle our love for the Sacred Heart, and urge us to honor it to the utmost of our power. This is the devotion of the first Fridays in the month. 1st, to increase the fervor of the members of the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart; 2dly, to remind men of all that they owe to this Divine Heart, which suffered so much for them; 3dly, to promote its worship by public acts of devotion, solemnly performed, and terminated by an act of reparation; 4thly, to consecrate the beginning of every

month to the Heart of Jesus, in order to obtain great graces.

AFFECTIONS.— At the feet of our Blessed Saviour, I will express my ardent desire to attain the ends of this day's devotion.

RESOLUTIONS.— To assist me in so doing, I will place before me an image of the Sacred Heart; and I will, during the day, frequently repeat the aspiration: O Amiable Heart of Jesus, etc.

POINT II

MOTIVES OF DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART

CONSIDERATION.— *Motives on the part of Jesus Christ.* No devotion can be more pleasing to Him, because it constantly reminds us of all that He has done and suffered for us. His Heart is of like nature with ours. We are glad to have our services gratefully remembered; He has the same feeling, as His words testify. On the eve of His death, when He gave power to His Apostles to consecrate the Holy Eucharist, He said twice, "Do this for a commemoration of Me." (St. Luke 22: 19.)

Motives on our own part. This devotion is a most efficacious means: 1st, to nourish the interior life; 2dly, to pay the debt of gratitude which we owe to our Divine Lord; 3dly, to preserve and increase our fervor in His holy service; 4thly, to obtain great graces from the Sacred Heart for ourselves and others.

APPLICATION.— How many motives for cultivating devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and for urging it upon others! Have we not been cold and negligent in doing this?

AFFECTIONS.— Pray for increased devotion to the Sacred Heart.

RESOLUTIONS.— Endeavor, with renewed ardor, to disseminate the knowledge and love of this devotion.

POINT III

PRACTICE FOR THE DAY SPECIALLY CONSECRATED TO
THE SACRED HEART

CONSIDERATION.— In what should our practice for to-day consist? In doing what all the faithful will do to-day in honor of the Sacred Heart; but doing it with all the fervor that our holy profession requires of us. In spending the day in devout recollection, keeping always in our minds the thought of the love and the sufferings of the Sacred Heart. In sanctifying the day by some penitential act or special devotion, such as the Way of the Cross. In trying to be more fervent this month than we were last, so as to be more pleasing to the heart of our Divine Lord.

APPLICATION.— Make a firm resolution to be faithful in these practices. Draw them out in detail. Offer them to the Heart of Jesus, through the intercession of the patron Saint of the month.

COLLOQUY with this holy Patron. Beg of him to obtain for you a share in the love which now influences his heart, on beholding in heaven the glorified Humanity of our Lord.

February *

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* These Meditations are taken from the Novena preceding the Feast of the Sacred Heart; but they are very suitable to the first Fridays of the month, with a few slight alterations.

The Preludes, the Application of Point III., and the Colloquy, may be taken from the preceding Meditation, p. 552.

MEDITATIONS FOR THE MONTHLY
RETREAT

January

MOTIVES AND MEANS TO MAKE A GOOD RETREAT

1st Prel. Think that you hear Jesus saying to you, "Give an account of thy stewardship." (St. Luke 16:2.)

2d Prel. Ask for grace to know whether you made a good or a bad use of last month's Retreat.

POINT I

MOTIVES FOR MAKING THIS RETREAT WELL

CONSIDERATION.—The practice of making a monthly Retreat is recommended by the Saints, and by all directors of religious houses. Our own order attaches great importance to it, and we may therefore conclude that God will bestow great and special graces on it. Moreover, it deeply concerns the dearest interests of our soul. During the month that has passed since our last Retreat we have done much for others; shall we, then, neglect ourselves? This Retreat may be our last; if we knew that it would be certainly so, with what fervor should we make it! But, in any case, God will demand a strict account of it, as of a great grace. In the order of His providence, it ought to contribute to preserve me from great evils; from the evil of forgetting the resolutions made in my last Retreat; and from the evil of growing negligent and careless in my spiritual exercises, so as no longer to derive from them necessary strength to sustain me in the spiritual combat, and, above all, in temptations against my vocation.

APPLICATION.—Consider attentively these motives for making a *good* Retreat; call to mind any defects in your former Retreats, in order to avoid them now; and

ask the help of God through the intercession of the patron Saint of the month.

AFFECTIONS.— Express to God your desires, hopes, and fears.

RESOLUTIONS.— To spare no pains to secure the fruit of the Retreat. Fix now on the time that you mean to devote to it.

POINT II

MEANS OF MAKING A GOOD RETREAT

CONSIDERATION.— The first means, according to the teaching of the Holy Ghost, is the fear of not making it well, of not taking sufficient trouble about it, of doing it merely out of custom. “*Initium sapientiæ timor Domini.*” “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” (Psalm 110: 10.)

The second means is to fix our thoughts upon it from the evening before, and to arrange the Points of Meditation according to what is most suitable for us.*

The third is, before going to rest to excite within ourselves an ardent desire and a firm hope to reap great fruit from the Retreat; to become better, stronger, more fervent in the service of God and our neighbor.

The fourth is, to hear or to celebrate Holy Mass with great devotion, and with the intention of obtaining these benefits; to offer our Communion for this intention, and to add some penance or act of mortification.

APPLICATION.— These means are neither burdensome nor difficult, while they are most important and salutary; let us, therefore, not hesitate to adopt them.

AFFECTIONS.— “My heart is ready, O God!” “Teach me to do Thy will.” (Psalm 107: 2; 142: 10.)

* The first two Points of this Meditation are for this day only. For the five other months, see p. 559.

RESOLUTIONS.—I will recall to mind that one of my Retreats with which I was most satisfied, in order that I may go through this with the same attention.

POINT III

THE WAY TO MAKE A GOOD MANIFESTATION OF CONSCIENCE

CONSIDERATION.—To attain the chief end of the monthly Retreat — namely, to become better — we must try to know ourselves, to see clearly where and how we need reformation. For this purpose we examine ourselves on the past month. In many religious communities, it is customary to give an account of this examination to the director. Nothing can be more useful; only, to do it with profit, we must first prepare ourselves properly to make this manifestation of conscience, and next, be very open and unreserved with our director.

APPLICATION.—Observe these practical rules: 1st, recollect yourselves in the presence of God; 2d, ask for grace to know yourselves, and to make yourselves known; 3d, examine the past month; 4th, make definite resolutions; 5th, offer them to God through our Blessed Lady.

COLLOQUY with the holy patron Saint of the month.

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* To render these Meditations (written for the season of Lent) more suitable for the Monthly Recollection, before preparing the Points, read as a preamble the preceding Meditation, p. 556. Take from it the Preludes and Colloquy.

SERIES OF QUESTIONS

WHICH MAY AID US IN OUR REVIEW OF THE MONTH
AND OUR EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

FIRST SERIES

ON OUR RELIGIOUS DUTIES

How do I stand,

I Relatively to God?

1. Sins? Offenses? Negligences?
2. Confidence? Generosity? Perseverance in desolations, etc.?
3. Exercise of the presence of God by the habit of ejaculatory prayer?

II. Relatively to my superiors; to obedience, to the rules?

1. Interior respect and love? Exteriorly? Speaking of them?—to them?
2. Conformity of judgment and will? Have I blamed them? Criticized, complained of them? Had aversions?
3. Am I a subject of joy or trouble to them, or of embarrassment?
4. Obedience of faith and love, or of fear or policy?
5. The common life—any singularly unreasonable exceptions?
6. Fidelity to rule, to discipline, to the established customs?

III. Relatively to others?

1. Am I charitable or severe in my judgments? Contempt? Detraction?
2. Zeal? Discretion? Prudence? Given edification in visits, journeys, etc.?

IV. Relatively to my brethren?

1. Mutual support? Union? Indulgence or harshness in words? Judgments?
2. Aversions? Envy? Detractions? Particular friendships?
3. Good example? Zeal for their advancement? The common good?

V. Relatively to the esteem and love of my vocation?

Desire of attaining its perfection? Renewed every day on rising?

VI. Relatively to my offices or employment?

How have I acquitted myself?

1. According to obedience, the instructions received, or according to my own ideas?
2. With exactitude? In conscience before God? For supernatural motives?

VII. Relatively to myself?

1. My vows? Poverty? Obedience? Chastity? Temptations? Occasions?
2. Violent passions? Difficulty of overcoming them? Which?
3. Particular examen? On what? With what success?
4. Piety? Fidelity to particular practices? Particular devotions?
5. Humility? Mortification? Corporal penances? Self-sacrifice?
6. Guided by faith and by reason, or by caprice and circumstances?
7. Am I a fervent or a lukewarm religious?

VIII. Relatively to my inferiors — pupils, penitents, the sick?

1. Vigilance and prudence? Gentleness and firmness? Zeal and patience?
2. Good example? Seeking help from God — from their Angel-guardians?

SECOND SERIES

ON SPIRITUAL PROGRESS IN PARTICULAR

Has there been progress regarding

1. Purity of conscience? In what?
 2. Facility in resisting temptations? The dominant passion?
 3. In overcoming sins or faults? In acquiring virtue?
 4. Humility? Self-contempt? Mortification? Regularity?
 5. Facility in union with God? Uniting the interior to the exterior life?
 6. Earnestness? Devotion? Fervor in spiritual exercises?
-

THIRD SERIES

ON SPIRITUAL EXERCISES IN PARTICULAR

Am I faithful in

1. Rising promptly and with devotedness?
2. Observing all the additions to Meditation?
3. Preparing Meditation well? Making it devout and practical?
4. Have I, before, during, and after Holy Mass, Confession, and Communion, done what was taught me, and from which I gained such fruit and consolation in the novitiate?
5. Putting in practice the means there pointed out for sanctifying all the actions of the day, even the most ordinary ones?

SOME MEDITATIONS FOR DAYS OF
COMMUNION

PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION

1st Prel. Imagine you hear Jesus Christ saying, "Take ye, and eat; this is my Body." (I. Cor. 11:24.)

2d Prel. Beg for the principal conditions of a good Communion.

POINT I

LIVELY FAITH

CONSIDERATION.—If we desire to have great devotion in our Communions, and that they should bear much fruit, we should make a careful preparation for them. There is the distant and the immediate preparation. The first includes confession, always useful, sometimes necessary (Conc. Trid. sess. xiii. c. vii. ;) then a careful preparation of our Meditation with the thought of the Communion before us. Let our last thought at night and our first on waking be of the great act before us; to desire ardently to perform it well; to form our special intention for it, as well as that for applying the plenary indulgence which we can gain. The immediate preparation consists in animating our souls with a lively faith in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. It all depends on our faith. Without faith we only see a bit of bread; and what devotion could we have then? But with the eyes of faith we see Jesus Christ, we see God. If, when we approach the altar, we saw Him under a sensible form, how transported with joy we should be! And a lively faith should produce the same effect on us that such a miracle as this would do.

APPLICATION.—Let us try, then, to strengthen and increase our faith, crying out with the desolate father

in the gospel, "Lord, I believe." I believe, O my Jesus! that I am about to receive Thee — Thyself, God and Man — although hidden from my eyes. I believe a thousand times more because Thou hast said it than if it had been proved by extraordinary miracles. I believe it; I am ready to seal my belief with my blood, as so many of the martyrs have done. "Credo, Domine: adjuva incredulitatem meam." "I do believe, Lord; help my unbelief." (St. Mark 9: 23.)

AFFECTIONS.— Ask for this faith in earnest prayer.

RESOLUTIONS.— Read occasionally some treatise on the Holy Eucharist.

POINT II

DEEP HUMILITY

CONSIDERATION.— The man who has an ardent faith in the real presence of Jesus Christ, of a God of infinite holiness and majesty, will be penetrated with deep humility — that sound disposition of heart which is so pleasing to God; he will be firmly convinced of his own absolute and entire unworthiness. This conviction is so beautifully expressed by the Church in the words she places on the lips of him who is about to receive Communion, "Domine, non sum dignus, ut intres sub tectum meum." "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof." (St. Matt. 8: 8.)

APPLICATION.— Look into yourself, and if you consider your past life, with its many sins and its great ingratitude, and your present life, with the various stains upon your soul, the great lukewarmness, and the many deficiencies in the little you do for God, you will also cry out, with a deep conviction of the truth, "I am unworthy, O my Jesus! altogether unworthy to approach Thee, or even to look at Thee. I adore Thee; I am as nothing before Thee; but how can I draw near to Thee?"

AFFECTIONS.— Endeavor to maintain these senti-

ments of humility, acknowledging your spiritual miseries in the words of the pious author of the *Imitation*, (iv. Book, vii.)

RESOLUTIONS.—Place yourself before God as a servant in presence of a good Master whom he is conscious of having badly served.

POINT III

GREAT CONFIDENCE AND ARDENT DESIRES

CONSIDERATION.—“Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you.” (St. Matt. 11:28.) These words of our Blessed Lord calm every fear of our hearts; our confidence is restored, and we see that the more weak and miserable we are, the greater is our right to go to Communion; we long for the moment when we shall receive Him who will work all this within us.

APPLICATION.—*Confidence* and *desires* are the two feelings which the Physician of our souls loves to find in the hearts of those who receive Him. Let us take care, then, to possess them, and say to Him, “O sweet and loving Saviour, Thou dost call to Thee the feeble and miserable; Thou dost invite them to sit down at Thy table; therefore I believe that I have a greater right than any one else to approach Thee, because I am more sinful, more miserable, than all others. Come, then, O my Jesus! come and cure me and enrich me. My soul sighs for Thee as the sick man longs for the coming of his physician, as the hungry beggar longs for the visit of his benefactor. Come, oh! come to me; without Thee I can not live.”

COLLOQUY with the Holy Virgin. Say to her with the blessed Claver, “O my good Mother! communicate to my heart one spark of the love with which yours is inflamed, or rather lend me for a moment your heart, that I may receive and shelter within it Jesus your Divine Son, and my Saviour.” (Life of B. Claver.)

PIOUS PRACTICES

TO HELP US TO COMMUNICATE WITH DEVOTION

CONSIDERATION.— There is a thought which confounds, troubles, and terrifies us; it is, that we are generally so dry and cold in our Communion, never, or hardly ever, feeling the deep emotion, the holy joy, that so many pious persons experience. That we may have nothing to reproach ourselves with, or rather, that we may share the happiness of these faithful hearts, let us imitate them with simplicity in certain pious practices which their fervor has suggested to them, as the following:

I. *The evening before,*

when they are in bed, before they fall asleep, they count the hours that separate them from the moment of Holy Communion, and they say to themselves, "In about so long — in so many hours — the God of heaven and earth will be here, in my heart. I shall be enriched with God. I shall possess a happiness which the angels can not share. What an event is about to take place! Oh! would that the hour was come! Would that I could at least pass the night in prayer and in preparation! O my good Angel and my holy Patron! do that for me which obedience will not allow me to do myself!"

II. *Waking in the morning,*

they imagine they hear what Jesus once said to Zaccheus, "Make haste, and come down; for this day I must abide in thy house." (St. Luke 19: 5.) Filled with joy at these words, they answer, "O Jesus! it is too great an honor, too great a happiness. Whence is this favor done to me, so poor and so miserable? Repose, then, O my soul! thy misery is at an end; joy and plenty shall be now thy portion. My God, grant me a

heart burning with love, or at least pure from all stain of sin." Then while they wash and dress, they say, "Wash me, O Lord! Lord, wash away the smallest stains from my soul, and clothe me with the wedding robe; adorn me with virtues."

III. *The last quarter of an hour before Communion,* they try to make with intense devotion the acts of faith, humility, confidence, and desires, as we have pointed out in the preceding Meditation. Then, with wonderful simplicity, they invite their good Angel and their holy Patron to take them by each hand and lead them to the banquet-hall, to the holy table.

IV. *At the moment of Holy Communion,* they imagine their hearts to have become suddenly like another manger of Bethlehem, where the Divine Saviour is to be born: and prostrating themselves at the foot of the cradle — with our Lady, St. Joseph, the shepherds, the angels, and the kings — they are filled with feelings of admiration, adoration, humility, gratitude, love, joy, hope, and supplication.

V. *After Holy Communion.*

The moments which follow Communion, says St. Teresa, are the most precious ones in life to pious souls. Even if they spend half an hour in thanksgiving, it seems too short to them. And in what do their thanksgivings consist? In the affections we have enumerated — and especially in the different acts which we find in our prayer-books — in the prayers for gaining indulgences, in the renewal of our vows of religion, and the resolutions of our last retreat, and particularly in the entire and absolute offering of ourselves, of each of our senses, of each faculty of the soul; and then add to this offering generous resolutions about the means of making a better use of Communion for the future.

But the religious who is vowed to the active life is *not concentrated in himself*. He desires to spread the fire of Divine love which is burning within him throughout the whole world. He desires the cause of Jesus Christ, and the souls redeemed by His Blood, to triumph in every quarter of the globe; and he invites the angels and saints in heaven to unite themselves to him to obtain the accomplishment of the prayers of the Sovereign Pontiff, of Bishops, priests, and missionaries laboring under him in the four quarters of the globe — “Dominus, conservet eum,” etc. For the conversion of heathen nations — “Confiteantur tibi, Deus, populi omnes.” That the enemies of the Church may be humbled — “Ut inimicos S. Ecclesiæ humiliare digneris.” (Lit. OO. SS.) For the rooting out of schisms and heresies — “Ut deleatur iniquitas.” For true peace and union among Christian princes by their return to religious unity — “Ut regibus et principibus Christianis pacem et veram concordiam donare digneris.” (Lit. OO. SS.) For the complete triumph of the Church, etc. That these ardent prayers may be heard, he implores the powerful intercession of Mary, presenting before her the whole human race degraded by sin, wasted away by unbelief, and he implores her to save them. Then turning to Jesus, he reminds Him of the unparalleled honors which the Catholic world has given to His holy Mother since the decree of her Immaculate Conception, and he asks in return that *all* the nations (whom he numbers, if he has time) should be brought into the true Church.*

* This expansive manner of praying has this great advantage, that it raises us above our little miseries, enlarges our ideas, and dilates our hearts. For further matter, see p. 581, also the chapters of the *Imitation* suited to raise the soul and fill it with unction and devotion.

THE LAST SUPPER

OR THE FIRST COMMUNION OF THE APOSTLES

1st Prel. Behold Jesus in the midst of His Apostles at the Last Supper.

2d Prel. Beg for redoubled faith and love.

POINT I

INSTITUTION OF THE SUPPER, OR OF HOLY COMMUNION

CONSIDERATION.— In the following words of the gospel we find the account of the great events of the institution of the Eucharist, the Priesthood, and the Holy Communion: “The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread; and giving thanks, broke, and said, Take ye, and eat: This is My Body, which shall be delivered for you: this do for commemoration of me.” (1. Cor. 11:23, 24.) “And taking the chalice, He gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of This; for This is My Blood of the new Testament, which shall be shed for many, unto remission of sins. And they all drank of It.” (St. Matt. 26: 27, 28.)

APPLICATION.— When we consider this great event, which took place, as it were, before our eyes, so precise are the facts, we are especially struck by two things — the immense and unspeakable love of Jesus Christ in giving Himself as Food to men, and the no less unspeakable happiness of the Apostles, suddenly become the living tabernacles of the Divinity, and transformed into God. O my soul! a few minutes only, and the miracle of love accomplished at the Last Supper shall be renewed in thee, and thou shalt enjoy the same bliss as the Apostles; a few minutes, and Jesus Christ will be resting on my tongue, and He shall say to me, by the mouth of the priest, “Eat; for this is My Body.”

AFFECTIONS.— Acts of faith, admiration, humility, hope, and desire.

RESOLUTIONS.— Strive during the day to keep constantly before you the representation of the Last Supper.

POINT II

THE WORDS THAT PRECEDED THE INSTITUTION OF THE HOLY COMMUNION

CONSIDERATION.— As the Sacrament of the Eucharist is the mystery of mysteries, and the most wonderful of all His miracles, our Lord gradually taught His disciples to believe it. From the second year of His ministry He made it a subject of instruction. St. John tells us that He said, “Your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead. I am the Living Bread which came down from heaven; the bread that I will give is My Flesh for the life of the world.” Here the Evangelist interrupted his record of our Lord’s words to say, “The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this Man give us His flesh to eat? Then Jesus said to them,” (not to show them they had mistaken Him, but to confirm their belief that He meant a *real* presence,) “Amen, amen, I say unto you, Except you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you. For My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed.” (St. John 6: 49, 51, 54, 56.)

APPLICATION.— Let us read over and over again, and meditate on these wonderful words. We shall find in them great light and holy lessons. We shall find all that can best prepare us to communicate with great fruit.

AFFECTIONS and **RESOLUTIONS** the same as in the first Point.

POINT III

THE EFFECTS WHICH FOLLOWED THE INSTITUTION
OF THE HOLY COMMUNION

CONSIDERATION.—According to the Holy Gospel, these effects were, 1st, on the part of our Lord, a greater tenderness for His Apostles. “Little children,” (St. John 13: 33,) (a word He had never used before,) “*manete in me, et ego in vobis.*” “Abide in Me, and I in you, (St. John 15: 4;) and 2d, a greater openness of heart with them, as they themselves remarked, “*Ecce nunc palam loqueris et proverbium nulum dicis.*” “Behold, now Thou speakest plainly, and speakest no proverb.” (St. John 16: 29;) on the part of the Apostles, a greater purity of heart, “*Jam vos mundi estis.*” “Now you are clean,” (St. John 15: 3;) a greater knowledge of spiritual things, “Now we know,” (St. John 16: 30;) and a greater affection and devotion to their Divine Master. All cried out with St. Peter, “*Etiamsi oportuerit me mori tecum, non te negabo. Similiter et omnes discipuli dixerunt.*” “Though I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee; and in like manner said all the disciples.” (St. Matt. 26: 35.)

APPLICATION.—You will experience these blessed effects in proportion to your earnestness and fidelity to the pious practices pointed out in the two preceding Meditations. Be, then, very faithful to them.

COLLOQUY with Blessed John Berchmanns, who derived such advantage from his frequent communions, on account of the great care with which he prepared for them. (Life of B. John Berchmanns, by the Rev. Father Vanderspeeten, S.J. Louvain, Fonteyn, 1865.)

THE PRECIOUS GIFTS THAT JESUS CHRIST
GIVES US

IN HOLY COMMUNION

1st Prel. Imagine you hear Jesus Christ saying these words,
"If thou didst know the gift of God." (St. John 4: 10.)

2d Prel. Beg the grace of really understanding the precious gifts that Jesus bestows on us in Holy Communion.

POINT I

GIFT OF AN IMMENSE LOVE

CONSIDERATION.— We rarely see a man carry his love for a friend to such a point as to sacrifice his fortune for his sake; still more rarely do we see any one sacrifice liberty and endure captivity for another's sake; and we *never* see any one sacrifice life and endure every torment for another. Our Divine Lord has done all this for us; and even that was not enough for His burning love. He chose to become our food in the Holy Communion, and to transform us into Himself by becoming one substance with Him. "He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood," saith He, "abideth in Me, and I in him." (St. John 6: 57.) Could He have bestowed on us a greater and more precious gift of His love?

APPLICATION.— In a few minutes Jesus will come and give me in Communion the pledge of His unspeakable love. What offering of gratitude shall I give Him in return? I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me. He will say to me, "Go, and do thou in like manner." (St. Luke 10: 37.) Do you try to do for Me what I, your Lord and your God, have done for you? Be always ready to sacrifice all for me — your possessions, your liberty, your very life, rather than

grieve Me by the slightest deliberate venial sin." Have I always been in this disposition? Am I now in it, habitually? What does my conscience tell me?

AFFECTIONS.— Beg earnestly of our Lord in the Holy Communion, that He may confirm you in these dispositions.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will endeavor to derive this fruit from my Communions, and will count all besides as little in comparison.

POINT II

PLEDGE OF A GLORIOUS RESURRECTION

CONSIDERATION.—"Omnes quidem resurgemus." "We shall all indeed rise again," says the Apostle; "but," he adds, "Sed non omnes immutabimur." "We shall not all be changed." (1. Cor. 15:51.) The bodies of the just will be resplendent, agile, impassible; those of the damned will be monstrous, heavy, and capable of every kind of suffering. Thus it will be that some will rise again to glory, and others to confusion. What a terrible alternative is before us all! Happy are those who have the pledge of a glorious resurrection. Let us rejoice, for that precious pledge is given to us in Holy Communion. By it the germ is planted in our flesh. Such is the teaching of the Church, who repeats it to us by the mouth of the priest every time he says, after having given, Holy Communion, "O sacred Feast! in which the pledge of future glory is given to us," alluding to those words of Jesus Christ, "He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the last day." (St. John 6:55.)

APPLICATION.— The thought that through Holy Communion we shall enjoy a life of glory and happi-

ness for both our body and soul ought to make us long earnestly for it. And we can attain the highest degrees of that blissful glory. "For," says St. Paul, "star differeth from star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead." (1. Cor. 15: 41, 42.) What is it that will increase this splendor? Evidently the frequent, and especially the *fervent*, reception of the Holy Eucharist.

AFFECTIONS.—Acts of faith and hope with regard to these consoling and encouraging truths.

RESOLUTIONS.—Never omit a Communion for which permission has been granted.

POINT III

PLEDGE OF A HIGHER GLORY IN HEAVEN

CONSIDERATION.—Besides giving us a pledge of a glorious resurrection, the Holy Communion will bring us an increase of glory and bliss in heaven. This we can easily understand; for the Apostle tells us the glory and capacity for enjoyment for each of us will be in proportion to his good works. He will "render to every man according to his works." (St. Matt. 16: 27.) It is charity only which gives supernatural merit to our good works, and these must increase in proportion to our charity; and as the immediate and principal effect of Holy Communion is to increase charity within us, it evidently follows that in frequent Communion we shall find a great treasure of merit, and obtain a high degree of glory in heaven.

COLLOQUY with St. Stanislaus Kostka, who had the happiness of receiving Communion twice from the hands of angels.

THE WONDERFUL EFFECTS

OF HOLY COMMUNION

- 1st Prel.* Imagine you hear Jesus Christ saying these words,
 "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His
 blood, you shall not have life in you." (St. John 6: 54.)
- 2d Prel.* Ask the grace of knowing and experiencing the wonderful effects of Holy Communion.

POINT I

IT PRESERVES AND INCREASES THE PURITY OF OUR
SOULS

CONSIDERATION.—It is of faith that Holy Communion remits many venial sins to those who receive it with fitting dispositions, and that it purifies their souls from many stains which render them less pleasing in the eyes of their Lord. It is of faith again that it preserves them from falling back into sin; first, by diminishing the violence of their passions and temptations — the two sources of all sin — and then by infusing new light into their souls showing them the power of sin, and inspiring them with a hatred of it, and giving them fresh energy to resist it. This is why we find such an extraordinary purity of soul in so many Christians living in the midst of the temptations of the world. Frequent Communion has bestowed this grace on them. What wonders has it worked in you?

APPLICATION.—To make sure of obtaining the full benefit of Holy Communion, which we receive regularly every week, we should adopt that beautiful custom of St. Aloysius, who went to Communion every week. He endeavored to pass the first part of the week well, to show his gratitude to Jesus; and the second part, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, to make

the best preparation he could to receive Him again. Let us do the same, and Holy Communion will become for us, as it did to him, an infallible means of attaining a high degree of purity of soul and very great perfection.

AFFECTIONS.—Thanksgiving to St. Aloysius, who has bequeathed to us this pious practice. Beg of him to obtain for you grace to be faithful to it after his example.

RESOLUTIONS.—Endeavor to carry it out at least during some weeks.

POINT II

IT PRESERVES AND INCREASES THE VIGOR OF OUR SOUL

CONSIDERATION.—Not only does Holy Communion keep our soul pure and pleasing in the sight of God, but it gives it an extraordinary vigor. Our Lord signifies this by giving Himself to us under the species of bread and wine; and as the life of our body depends on its union with the soul, so does the supernatural life of our soul depend on its union with God by the bond of love. The closer this union, the more vigorous is the soul; and by Holy Communion the soul is more intimately united with Jesus Christ, says St. Cyprian, than when two pieces of wax are melted into one. Our Divine Lord also tells us so when He says, “He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him.” (St. John 6: 57.)

APPLICATION.—Let us give glory to God; let us remember with deep gratitude how often our Communion has strengthened and preserved us in difficulties and temptations. It will, we trust, enable us to persevere in our holy vocation, and obtain eternal happiness.

AFFECTIONS.—Gratitude, veneration, and ardent desire for Holy Communion.

RESOLUTIONS.—To communicate as frequently as is permitted to us, but always with great attention and devotion.

POINT III

IT ELEVATES AND PERFECTS OUR SOULS

CONSIDERATION.—The most wonderful effect of Holy Communion is, that it changes us, so to speak, into Jesus Christ, making us live in Him and be made like to Him; thus anticipating that which St. John tells us we shall be one day in glory, “*Similes ei erimus.*” St. Thomas thus beautifully explains this truth: “As an offshoot from a good tree, when grafted upon a wild one, draws out its bitter taste, and makes it bear good fruit, so the body of Jesus Christ, when ingrafted in us, corrects our faults, communicates its own excellence, and enables us to bring forth fruits of justice like unto those which He performs Himself.”

APPLICATION.—Let us rejoice at the thought of the immense blessings which Holy Communion confers on us. But never let us forget that our share in them will be in proportion to the preparation we make for it, and the dispositions with which we approach it. These we have pointed out in a preceding Meditation, (pp. 563–566.) Put them in practice to-day.

COLLOQUY with the Blessed Virgin endowed by God with such glorious prerogatives and eminent perfections at the moment of the Incarnation of His Eternal Word.

WONDERS THAT JESUS CHRIST WORKS IN US

IN GIVING HIMSELF TO US IN HOLY COMMUNION

1st Prel. Imagine you hear king David saying in prophecy, "He hath made a remembrance of His wonderful works." (Psalm 110: 4.)

2d Prel. Ask the grace of prizing as you ought the wonders wrought in you by the Holy Eucharist.

POINT I

MIRACLE OF LOVE

CONSIDERATION.— "Majorem hac dilectionem nemo habet, ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis." "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (St. John 15: 13.) He willed to give us this proof of love from His entrance into the world. But death came to separate us from Him. He could not bear this separation, and decreed that, after dying for us, He would still dwell with us to the end of time, and gave Himself to us for food, feeding us with His body and His blood; and as the means of carrying out this miracle of love, He instituted the Blessed Eucharist, the Holy Communion.

APPLICATION.— How many times has this miracle of God's love been renewed in you? Count, if you can, the number of your Communions, and then ask yourself what marvels of devotion and generosity for Jesus Christ they have produced in you in return; or rather, how it is you are still so lukewarm, so ungenerous in His holy service. Seek for the cause of this, and try to remedy it.

AFFECTIONS.— Humble yourself, ask forgiveness. Awaken in your heart an ardent desire to correspond more generously with the love of Jesus.

RESOLUTIONS.—Never to depart from the holy Table until you have laid upon it the offering of some generous sacrifice as a testimony of your love.

POINT II

MIRACLE OF POWER

CONSIDERATION.—The miracle of God's omnipotence shines forth no less than His love in Holy Communion. No effort of human intelligence can sound its depths. Who can comprehend how, under the appearance of bread which is no longer bread, we can really receive Jesus Christ in body and soul, such as He is in heaven; or how many millions of people can receive at the same moment this same Jesus Christ without His being divided; or how, when the Host is broken, Jesus Christ is entire in each part, and even in each morsel of each part; or how, when the accidents of bread have disappeared, Jesus Christ is no longer present in the Host?

APPLICATION.—However impenetrable and impossible all these miracles may appear to us, we must have an entire and immovable faith in this mystery; and our merit will be so much greater before God, because we not only believe in what we do not see, but we believe in spite of the evidence of our eyes, our taste, and all our senses. To do this is perfect faith. Let us avail ourselves of the easy means of increasing the treasure of our merits by making frequent acts of faith concerning this wonderful mystery, either in words or by signs, bowing our knees or devoutly bending our head before the Blessed Sacrament, or even before the place where it reposes.

AFFECTIONS.—Acts of faith, admiration, and adoration.

RESOLUTIONS.—Contemplating the miracles which

God works in order to come to me, I resolve to make every possible effort to receive Him worthily.

POINT III

MIRACLES OF PATIENCE

CONSIDERATION.— Another miracle, which strikes the mind of any one who thinks of the atrocious insults given to Jesus in the Sacrament of His love, is the patience with which He endures them. If we consider the injuries done to Him through Communion alone, they are numerous and revolting: injuries from impious men, who horribly profane the Blessed Eucharist; injuries from heretics, who blaspheme it; injuries from Catholics, some who despise Communion, some who approach it with disgust, with terrible lukewarmness, or with the conviction that they will bring our Lord into a heart possessed by the devil. And Jesus takes no vengeance! He bears all these outrages, and He has borne them for centuries with invincible patience.

APPLICATION.— Have always before your mind this miracle of patience and of sweetness, and you will labor with more energy and success to correct your hastiness, rudeness, and temper, if it were only with the view of offering some consolation to the desolate heart of Jesus. Offer Him to-day in Holy Communion some generous resolutions.

COLLOQUY with Our Lord.

MORE AMPLE MATTER

CAN BE FOUND IN THE FOLLOWING

I.

In Latin: *Mensis Eucharisticus*. By Father Lercari, S.J.
Thirty-one Meditations before and after Holy Communion.

II.

The same in French, amplified and arranged for the Sundays,
Feasts, and Octaves throughout the year.

III.

The greater part of the fourth book of the IMITATION OF CHRIST,
especially the chapters 1—2—4—7—13—14—16—17.

FEAST OF ST. JOSEPH *

1st Prel. Imagine you see St. Joseph holding the hand of the Child Jesus, and looking lovingly on His most chaste Spouse.

2d Prel. Pray for grace to acquire increased esteem and love for St. Joseph.

POINT I

ON THE EMINENT DIGNITY AND THE GREAT
INFLUENCE OF ST. JOSEPH

CONSIDERATION.—In order that you may form some idea of the eminent dignity of St. Joseph, and the virtue of his intercession, consider that, in the eternal decrees of Divine Providence, he was called to the most exalted position, the holiest office, that could be conferred on any created being. He was chosen to be the spouse of the Mother of God, the adopted or legal Father of the Son of God made man, the Head of the Holy Family, and the one to whom was confided the secret of the Divine Incarnation. Consider that God confers the gifts of His grace in proportion to the dignity of those whom He is pleased to exalt; that St. Joseph, to whom the Holy Spirit gave the title of just, “Joseph cum esset justus,” (St. Matt. 1: 19,) co-operated most faithfully with the abundant graces allotted to him, and that he thus amassed immense treasures of merit and holiness. Consider also that the degree of glory granted to the saints is proportionate to their merits, and you will justly conclude that, after the Mother of God, St. Joseph is the saint whose place is nearest to the Eternal Throne, and that his intercession must be, in a manner, all-powerful. For how could Jesus refuse to grant the prayer of him whose will He accomplished in all things while on earth?

* The four following Meditations, being intended for special Festivals, have no fixed place in the First Volume, which does not correspond with the Calendar.

APPLICATION.— We must thence conclude that our confidence in St. Joseph, however great, can not be excessive — that we can never address him in vain. This belief is authorized by the numerous favors obtained through the invocation of the saint, favors attested by reliable witnesses, and amongst others, by St. Teresa. “I do not recollect,” says this saint, “having ever prayed to St. Joseph in vain. I can not reflect without astonishment on the graces which God has granted me through his intercession. It appears,” she adds, “that God permits the other saints to assist us in particular necessities; but I know from experience that St. Joseph protects us on all occasions, as if our Lord desired to show that, having been subject to Him on earth, He can now refuse him nothing in heaven.” How much should we then be to blame did we not recur with boundless confidence to St. Joseph in all our difficulties!

AFFECTIONS.— Congratulate St. Joseph, thank him, and place yourself under his protection.

RESOLUTIONS.— Let us endeavor to disseminate devotion to St. Joseph, invoking him with great confidence in all our necessities, and striving to impart this confidence to others.

POINT II

TRANSCENDENT HAPPINESS OF ST. JOSEPH

CONSIDERATION.— To no other saint has it ever been granted, to no other will it be given during all time, to participate in the happiness which fell to the lot of St. Joseph, not only during life, but even in his last moments. During thirty years, while the most Blessed Virgin was his constant companion and assistant, he dwelt under the same roof with Jesus, and in the closest intimacy with Him. He was indeed called on to labor, and, with the sweat of his brow, to

procure the necessities of life for the family dependent on him, and we may suppose that he was not exempt from suffering; but the consciousness that he labored for Jesus, that our Lord Himself beheld his trials and pains, must have infinitely alleviated them, and in fact transformed them into joys. His life in this vale of tears must have been a foretaste of Paradise; and his death — oh! how sweet, how full of consolation and encouragement was that most holy death! He died in the arms of Jesus and Mary. In these words, all is told.

APPLICATION.— You are ready to envy the happiness of St. Joseph: but do you not participate therein? Does not your community bring to your mind the blessed habitation of Nazareth? Do you not claim the holy Virgin as your Mother and special Protectress? Do you not abide under the same roof with Jesus, ever near you in the Holy Sacrament? and is not yours the privilege of conversing familiarly with Him at all times? Is it not for Him, and in His sight, that you labor, and endure many privations and sufferings? And has He not pledged Himself to reward your sacrifice with eternal life? This promise should suffice to banish from your mind the fear of death which so often besets you. And what may you not hope to obtain, at that last moment, from the protection of St. Joseph, the special Patron of a happy death, when, like him, you have employed your best years and your utmost strength in the service of Jesus, whom he loved so well on earth, and from whom he can now obtain all things in heaven? Continue with increased fervor your devotions in his honor, particularly the practice of invoking him frequently as the Patron of a happy death, in the indulgenced prayer, “Jesus, Mary, Joseph, assist me in my last agony.” (One hundred days.)

COLLOQUY with St. Joseph.

FEAST OF ST. BENEDICT

PATRIARCH OF THE WESTERN MONKS *

1st Prel. Look on the Saint in celestial glory.

2d Prel. Pray for grace to imitate his virtues, that you may share in his reward.

POINT I

ORIGIN OF ST. BENEDICT AND OF HIS ORDER

CONSIDERATION.—Benedict, the son of wealthy parents, was sent at an early age to the public schools of Rome; but, terrified by the immorality to which the youth of that period were abandoned, he resolved, at the age of fifteen, to renounce the world, and serve God in solitude. A monk who dwelt in the vicinity of Rome pointed out to him a scarcely accessible cavern amidst the mountains of Subiaco, and promised to provide him secretly with the means of subsistence. Benedict spent there three years in the practice of prayer and penance, God alone being the witness of his austerities; but a day came when his retreat was discovered by some neighboring shepherds, and the grotto was thenceforth beset with an ever-increasing throng of curious visitors. The young hermit, actuated by his zealous spirit, spoke to them of God and of the great truths of religion with so much force and unction that numbers of his auditors renounced the

* Born at Norcia (kingdom of Naples), 480; retired to Subiaco, 496—to Monte Casino, 529; visited and venerated by Totila, King of the Goths, 542. Died 543. Principal institutions or reforms springing from the Order: Cumaldulense, 970; Cistercians or Bernardines, 1100; Feuillants, 1592; Trappistes, 1662. Principal independent Congregations: Fulda, 860; Cluny, 910; St. Maur, 1010; this latter re-established at Solesmes by Dom Gueranger, 1833, and recognized with abbatial title by Gregory XVI., 1837. Before the reform, the Order comprehended, including affiliations and branches of both sexes, more than 30,000 houses.

world, in order to follow the evangelical counsels under his guidance and after his example; so that, as time went on, he found it necessary to erect as many as twelve monasteries, in each of which he placed twelve monks with a superior, reserving to himself the general direction of all. Such was the commencement of the celebrated order of Saint Benedict — such the source of that exalted perfection to which his heroic acts of virtue had paved the way. Of these, a single one may be mentioned as an example. On one occasion, being violently tempted, he cast himself, unclothed, into a thicket of brambles and nettles, whence he came forth covered with blood. God granted him, as a reward, amongst other extraordinary favors, the grace of exemption, during the remainder of his life, from all temptations of a rebellious nature.

APPLICATION.— In corresponding with the grace of our vocation, we, like St. Benedict, pledged ourselves to aim at perfection. The means of attaining it have been within our reach. How is it, then, that we are still so far removed from it? Is this not owing to our want of generosity? Let us here examine ourselves, and inquire if our fervor in God's service has ever been manifested by a single heroic or even generous action?

AFFECTIONS.— Confusion, regret, and self-reproach.

RESOLUTIONS.— I will let no day pass without gaining at least some trifling victory over myself — as a preparation for accomplishing greater things, should the opportunity occur.

POINT II

PROGRESS OF SAINT BENEDICT, AND OF HIS ORDER

CONSIDERATION.— From the time when God was pleased to withdraw Benedict from his solitary life, and to employ him in the direction of souls, He seemed to delight in bestowing extraordinary gifts on His

chosen servant: the gift of discerning spirits, those of contemplation, of prophecy and miracles; and the saint corresponding faithfully with these evidences of Divine grace, he made wondrous progress in virtue and religious perfection. The advancement of the Order which he had founded was no less remarkable, particularly from the time when vexatious annoyances to which he was unjustly subjected led him to change his abode, and remove to Monte Casino. The great monastery which he built on that spot, the admirable order reigning therein, owing to the wise provisions of the rule which he had laid down, and the large community of nuns established in the vicinity, under the direction of his sister, St. Scholastica, attracted general attention. So great was the admiration conceived by the chief nobles of the country for the new institute that they bestowed on it wide domains, and confided to its members the education of their children. Many Princes, Kings, and Sovereign Pontiffs became, in succession, its protectors and advocates. Like the mustard-seed of the Gospel, it spread its branches far and wide, and inspired the laity with such veneration for the monastic state that it became customary to speak of it in a special manner as *religion*, while those who embraced it were denominated *religious*; and these terms have continued in use to our own day.

APPLICATION.—Let each one strive, according to his capabilities, to obtain the blessing of Heaven on the order or institute to which he belongs, that its members may increase in number, and daily grow in fervor and sanctity. How have we hitherto labored for this end? What must we do in future?

AFFECTIONS.—Ardent prayers that our desires and efforts may not prove fruitless.

RESOLUTIONS.—To manifest increased fervor and generosity in the service of God.

POINT III

GLORY OF ST. BENEDICT AND OF HIS ORDER

CONSIDERATION.— A twofold halo surrounds the name of the glorious St. Benedict. Not only has his history been related by St. Gregory the Great, that most illustrious Pontiff and doctor of the Church, but we find him receiving from posterity the title of Patriarch of the cenobitical life in the West; while for the Benedictines may be claimed the honor of having stood alone, as an order, in the Latin Church, until the twelfth century, serving as a model to succeeding ages, and, while carrying out the aims proposed by their founder, rendering immense services to religion and society. Through their means were restored the ruins with which the repeated devastations of barbarous hordes had strewed the land; by the work of their hands, deserts were transformed into fertile plains and flourishing cities, and ancient monuments of literature and art collected and preserved for future generations; while by the establishment of monasteries in distant and uncultivated regions, the limits of Christian civilization were extended. To St. Benedict and the Order which bears his name belongs also the honor of having given to the Church many pontiffs, bishops, doctors, and illustrious missionaries, and to heaven, nearly six thousand saints of both sexes.

APPLICATION.— Endeavor, like St. Benedict, to seek always and in all things only the glory of God, and to die daily more and more to yourself and to every feeling of self-love. Thus shall the halo of celestial glory be your portion through all eternity; for God loves to lavish His graces on the humble, and to lend His mighty aid to the work of their sanctification.

COLLOQUY with St. Benedict.

FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION

OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

1st Prel. Represent to yourself the Archangel Gabriel announcing to the Blessed Virgin the mystery of the Incarnation.

2d Prel. Beg of God to grant you the dispositions requisite for duly celebrating this great Festival.

POINT I

THE FAVORS CONFERRED, THIS DAY, ON MARY BY
ALMIGHTY GOD

CONSIDERATION.— What were the favors which God granted to Mary on the day of the annunciation? Choosing as His Ambassador the Archangel Gabriel, one of the greatest Princes of His heavenly Court, He signified, through this celestial messenger, that He had selected her from all eternity to be the Mother, according to human nature, of His Eternal Word. He crowned the favors already conferred on Mary by communicating to her *the plenitude of grace*, thus elevating her to a degree of merit and sanctity even beyond that of cherubim and seraphim. He accomplished in her the ineffable mystery of the Incarnation, the mystery of a God coming to dwell among men! All these Divine favors are brought before us in the Gospel of this day. At that time, says St. Luke, “the Angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a Virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the Virgin’s name was Mary. And the angel being come in, said unto her, Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. Thou shalt conceive, and shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus.” Then, Mary’s fears with regard to her virginity having been dispelled by the assurance of the angel, she gave her consent in these words: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done to me according to thy word.” (St. Luke 1: 26–28, 31, 38.) And immediately, as St. John says, “The Word was

made Flesh, and dwelt among us." (St. John 1 : 14.)

APPLICATION.— Here many practical reflections must naturally suggest themselves. 1st, Mary, loaded as she is with Divine favors, and elevated to a dignity surpassing that of the seraphim, thinks only of her unworthiness, and speaks of herself as the handmaid of the Lord, "*Ecce ancilla Domini*;" whilst I, utterly destitute of merit, and conscious only of sin and imperfection, consider myself superior to others, and assume pretensions to which I have no claim. 2d, Mary, although recognizing the great things accomplished in her regard, perceives in them, as we find by her reply to the congratulations of Elizabeth, only the gratuitous gifts of God, "*Fecit mihi magna, qui potens est*;" whilst I appropriate to myself as personal merits the few good qualities which I possess, and even seek to obtain credit for them in the eyes of men! 3d, Mary desires rather to please God by preserving her virginal purity than to obtain the honor of Divine maternity; while I am so little moved by the dread of sullyng the purity of my soul by sin.

AFFECTIONS.— Let us beg our beloved Mother to share with us, poor miserable sinners, the fullness of grace conferred on her. Ask of her in particular the virtue of humility, to which, according to St. Bernard, she is indebted for her Divine maternity. "If through her virginity she pleased God, it was through her humility that she conceived Him." (Hom. I. on "*Missus est*.")

RESOLUTIONS.— As we commemorate on this anniversary the happiest day of our Blessed Lady's life, the day which may be said to have been the commencement of her glory, we may hope that she will be disposed to receive our petitions with special favor. We will therefore ask much with boundless confidence, not only for ourselves, and the community to which we belong, but also for our holy Mother, the Church, sub-

ject as she now is, in her head and in all her members, to the fierce persecutions of her enemies.

POINT II

THE FAVORS CONFERRED ON US, THROUGH MARY, ON THIS DAY

CONSIDERATION.—What were the graces which God conferred on us, this day, through Mary? He proved His infinite love for us by giving us His only Son: “God so loved the world,” says the Evangelist St. John, “as to give His only-begotten Son,” who became a man, subject to suffering and death, “that the world might be saved by Him.” (St. John 3: 16, 17.) And it was through Mary, who on this day became a mother while yet a virgin, that it was His will to bestow that Divine Son on us. “Mary of whom was born Jesus.” (St. Matt. 1: 16.)

APPLICATION.—Let us enter into the spirit of the Church, and strive to acquire the sentiments with which she seeks to inspire her children on this Festival. Let us awaken in our hearts feelings of love for God the Creator, our Heavenly Father, of gratitude toward the Eternal Son of God made man for us this day, and of filial devotion to the Holy Virgin, who, at the same time, became the Mother of God. And that our devotion may be practical, let us endeavor to testify our love by increased fidelity in accomplishing the will of our Heavenly Father, which is no other than our sanctification: “*Hæc est voluntas Dei, sanctificatio vestra*, (1. Thess. 4: 3;) our gratitude, by honoring the ineffable abasement of the Eternal Son of God in His Incarnation, and by esteeming and practicing the virtue of humility; and our filial devotion to the Mother of God, who is also our Mother, by following, as far as possible, her example.

COLLOQUY with the Blessed Virgin.

FEAST OF ST. ALOYSIUS GONZAGA *

1st Prel. Represent to yourself the Saint, supremely happy, on his death-bed.

2d Prel. Pray for grace to imitate his generosity, that you may participate in his joy.

POINT I

THE GENEROSITY WITH WHICH ST. ALOYSIUS STROVE
TO ATTAIN PERFECTION

CONSIDERATION.— When we read of the heroic acts of the saints, we say to ourselves, perhaps unconsciously, This is not surprising; they were saints, and I am not one: as if all saints had been sanctified from their birth, and as if they had not attained holiness by generous and heroic victories over themselves. We find traces of these victories in every page of the life of St. Aloysius. We read therein that, in order to curb the wanderings of his imagination, he persevered in prayer for many hours together, until he acquired the power of spending one without distraction; that, to quell his inclination to anger, he watched so carefully over himself that he at length succeeded in mastering the first movements of irritation; that, in order to conquer every feeling of vanity and self-love, he took the resolution of appearing at a court festival in Mantua, in such mean attire as to draw upon himself the ridicule of the entire assemblage. And what efforts did he not make to preserve his soul from the least stain of sin! To such lengths did he carry this vigilance that he avoided even looking at any woman, and subjected himself to continued fasts, rigorous disciplines, and prolonged vigils. And lastly, how severe was the struggle which he maintained, during two years, to gain permission to resign his principality and enter religion!

* Born, 1568; entered religion, November, 1585; died, 21st June, 1591; beatified, 1605; canonized, 1729.

APPLICATION.— These examples will suffice to prove that the sanctity of Aloysius was not natural or innate; that it was acquired by the most strenuous efforts; and that we may likewise become saints by pursuing the same method.

AFFECTIONS.— Beg of St. Aloysius to obtain for you that you may put in practice all the means of sanctification within your reach.

RESOLUTIONS.— In all difficulties, endeavor, like St. Aloysius, to gain courage by saying to yourself, “What proportion does all this bear to the rewards of eternity?”

POINT II

THE CONSTANCY WITH WHICH ST. ALOYSIUS STROVE TO ATTAIN PERFECTION

CONSIDERATION.— From the time that St. Aloysius entered the novitiate, and during the two years that he remained therein, he directed all his efforts toward one end, namely, that of perfecting the work of his sanctification. Thus his progress, during these two years, was astonishing. It was no less so at a later period, owing to the unvarying constancy of the Saint, which continued unshaken through an illness of three months' duration, and which did not give way even at the approach of death, when he begged with tears to receive the discipline, and to be laid on ashes upon the ground, that he might die as befitted a penitent!

APPLICATION.— Like St. Aloysius, we entered religion with the desire of becoming saints. In the beginning, we gained many victories over ourselves, and our progress in virtue corresponded with our efforts; but by degrees, our courage failed, our vigilance was relaxed, and hence the little progress we have made, after so many years spent in the school of Christian perfection and holiness.

AFFECTIONS.— Acknowledge and regret your faults.

Have recourse to the mercy of God in humble prayer.

RESOLUTIONS.—To read over your resolutions of retreat, and put them in practice with renewed fervor.

POINT III

REWARD OF THE EFFORTS OF ST. ALOYSIUS TO ATTAIN PERFECTION

CONSIDERATION.—In return for these generous efforts, St. Aloysius received from God a sublime gift of prayer, together with the gift of tears, that of perfect chastity, and many other signal favors. Among these was one in particular, which we should earnestly desire to share with him, namely, his holy death, preceded by peace, joy, and admirable confidence, as is testified by a letter written by him eight days before his decease to his pious mother. "If charity," he says, "should cause us to weep with those who mourn, and to rejoice with those who are joyful, your consolation should be very great, my dearest mother, on account of the grace which the Lord grants you in my person, leading me, as He does, to true happiness. God, in His Divine Mercy, calls me to heaven, to that sovereign felicity which I have so negligently sought to obtain. He promises to reward the few tears that I have shed." We find the same sentiments expressed throughout the remainder of the letter, as well as in his latest conversations with his religious brethren and superiors, who expressed their conviction that they witnessed the death of a saint. It pleased God to make known the sanctity of His servant by numerous and striking miracles. He was solemnly beatified fourteen years after his death, and during the lifetime of his mother.

APPLICATION.—Let us live the life of the saints, that we may participate in their glory.

COLLOQUY with St. Aloysius Gonzaga.

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